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THE

WORKS,

IN

VERSE AND PROSE,

OF

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, Esq;

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

LETTERS to particular FRIENDS, from the Year 1739 to 1763.

LONDON,

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall.

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PREFACE.

THOUGH the Character of Mr. *Shenſtone* is too well known, and his reputation as a Writer too firmly eſtabliſhed, to require any further commendation, yet it may perhaps be expected that ſome apology ſhould be made for this additional volume of his Works, containing Familiar Letters to ſome of his moſt intimate Friends.

To thoſe who may think ſuch an apology requiſite, it might be ſufficient to ſay, that the reception which the former volumes have met with, affords the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe that an addition to them would be very acceptable to the Public; and that the author's talent in *epiſtolary* writing appears not to have been

inferior to that which diſtinguiſhes his other compoſitions.

But it may be objected, that, whatever their merit may be, *Letters*, not intended for the Public, ought not to be publiſhed, and that an act of this kind is a violation of private friendſhip.

This objection, it muſt be confeſſed, carries with it ſuch an air of delicacy, that the perſons here concerned are very willing to give it all due attention. At the ſame time they cannot but obſerve, that it will not hold in all caſes, and therefore muſt unavoidably be ſubject to ſome limitations—that theſe limitations muſt vary, as the circumſtances of caſes happen to vary—and that not to make proper allowances for ſuch circumſtances is highly unreaſonable—injurious to many who have deſerved well of the Public by this very conduct, and detrimental to the intereſts

of

of Literature. It might perhaps be difficult, and is by no means neceſſary, to enumerate theſe ſeveral limitations. It will be ſufficient in this place to ſay, that where neither the reputation of the Writer, nor that of any other perſon, is injured, there the force of the objection evidently ceaſes. And it is not only believed, on the moſt mature deliberation, that this is the caſe in the preſent inſtance; but moreover that there are poſitive good reaſons in its favour, reſpecting as well the Writer's character in this *ſpecies* of compoſition, as the ſatisfaction and entertainment of the Reader.

The encouragement which has been uſually given to Works of this nature might ſeem to make theſe obſervations unneceſſary! But it was not thought ſufficient barely to ſhelter this publication under the ſanction of ſuch an authority; as it is well known that the wantonneſs of curioſity has ſometimes encouraged deſigns

by no means juſtifiable: and it is as readily acknowledged that the following Letters are deficient in many particulars requiſite to excite that curioſity, being neither written on popular ſubjects, nor addreſſed to perſons of rank and eminence in the world. They will not fail however to afford an agreeable entertainment to ſuch as can reliſh an animated diſplay of the various efforts of a fine imagination for a length of years, whether amuſing itſelf with rural embelliſhments, or occupied in other pleaſures of learned retirement, and a warm diſintereſted friendſhip. Such are the ſubjects of the following Letters! and if any perſon ſhould ſtill retain a doubt concerning the propriety of perpetuating them in this manner, he ſhall be finally referred to the writer's own authority, who, in a letter dated October 23, 1754, thus expreſſes himſelf:

"I con-

"I confeſs to you that I am conſiderably "mortified by Mr. W—'s conduct in re- "gard to thoſe Letters (meaning his own "letters to that gentleman's brother); and, "rather than they ſhould have been ſo "unneceſſarily deſtroyed, would have given "more money than it is allowable for me "to mention with decency. I look upon "my Letters as ſome of my *chef-d'œuvres*; "and could I be ſuppoſed to have the "ſmalleſt pretenſions to propriety of ſtyle "or ſentiment, I ſhould imagine it muſt "appear principally in my Letters to his "brother, and one or two more friends. I "conſider them as the records of a friend- "ſhip that will be always dear to me, and "as the hiſtory of my mind for theſe "twenty years paſt."

When it is conſidered how ſeldom ſo valuable a collection of real correſpondence is to be met with, and how difficult it is to ſupply the want of it by a fictitious one, it cannot be doubted that the Public will

be pleaſed to ſee the loſs here complained of ſo well repaired, and to be furniſhed with ſuch genuine examples of the Author's ſtyle and ſentiments, together with an authentic hiſtory of his mind, for ſo long a ſpace of time.

To conclude: The talents of this Author, on whatever ſubject they were exerciſed, were ſo uncommon, and the fame of his little *Ferme ornée*, under the conduct of a taſte entirely original, was become ſo conſiderable, that every ſpecimen of the one, and every anecdote relative to the improvement of the other, ſeemed too intereſting to be buried in oblivion: at leaſt, they were thought ſo by thoſe to whom the *greater* part of this Collection is addreſſed:—perſons indeed confeſſedly partial to the Writer's talents, and intereſted in his commendations; but at the ſame time perſons neither ſo regardleſs of their Friend's reputation, nor their own, as to have

have hazarded either, without the ſtrongeſt perſuaſion that their partiality had not impoſed upon their judgement; and that it was no indecent oſtentation in them, by this public act, to teſtify, that they eſteemed it not only a peculiar felicity in their fortunes, but likewiſe ſome degree of credit, to have enjoyed the pleaſures of ſuch a friendſhip throughout ſo conſiderable a period of human life.

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MR.

MR. SHENSTONE'S

LETTERS.

I. To Mr. JAGO, with a Song, and the Author's Sentiments on Musical Composition.

Dear Sir, 1739.

AS my head is considerably more confused than usual, by reason of a bad cold, I shall aim no higher in this letter than at bare *recitative*, reserving all my *airs* for a season when my mind is more in *tune*. Such, I hope, will be the time which you set apart to attend the *chief musician*, at Birmingham. I thoroughly design to lend an *ear* to *his* performance, on condition he will not refuse one to a proposal I intend to make, of having, one day or other, a

merry ſtrain at the Leaſows. But if you have any *penchant* to ſee the face of your humble ſervant at Birmingham, your moſt effectual way will be to inform him when theſe ſolemn nuptials betwixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee are to be conſummated. I will, *certes*, not be abſent at the throwing of the ſtocking, any more than Parſon Evans in Shakeſpeare would be "abſence at the grace." I have ſent a ſong, not that I am ſure I have not ſent it before; but that, if you can ſee any joke that it containeth, the fore-mentioned gentleman may be aſked to tranſlate it into muſic. When I uſe this expreſſion, you will, peradventure, look upon it as my opinion, that in muſical compoſitions, ſound ought as much to anſwer ſenſe as one language does another, inſomuch, that ſuch and ſuch thoughts ought to bring into our heads ſuch and ſuch ſounds, and *vice verſa*. But in caſe there is no ſenſe, and no thought, the more languages a ſentence is tranſlated into, the more 'tis expoſed. And in caſe it be the misfortune of my little piece to have neither, I beg that Mr. Marriett may not inform any body what it ſignifies in muſic. As a farther proof of the confuſed ſtate of my intellects, you ſee, almoſt at the end of my letter, my thanks for the packet, &c. which ought to have been placed in the very front of it, in order to expreſs,

preſs, in ſome degree, the ſenſe I have of your favours. I long to ſee you; and am, dear Sir,

Your moſt obedient

and faithful ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

SONG.

" When bright Ophelia treads the green
" In all the pride of dreſs and mien;
" Averſe to freedom, mirth, and play,
" The lofty rival of the day;
" Methinks to my enchanted eye,
" The lilies droop, the roſes die.

" But when, diſdaining art, the fair
" Aſſumes a ſoft, engaging air:
" Mild as the op'ning morn of May,
" And as the feather'd warblers gay:
" The ſcene improves where'er ſhe goes,
" More ſweetly ſmile the pink and roſe.

" O lovely maid! propitious hear,
" Nor think thy Damon inſincere.

" Pity my wild deluſive flame:
" For tho' the flow'rs are ſtill the ſame,
" To me they languiſh, or improve,
" And plainly tell me that I love."

II. To the ſame, in the Manner of PAMELA.

1739.

WELL! and ſo I ſate me down in my room, and was reading *Pamela*—— one might furniſh this book with ſeveral pretty decorations, thought I to myſelf; and then I began to deſign cuts for it, in particular places. For inſtance, one, where Pamela is forced to fall upon her knees in the arbor: a ſecond, where ſhe is in bed, and Mrs. Jewkes holds one hand, and Mr. B. the other: a third, where Pamela ſits ſewing in the ſummer-houſe, &c. So I juſt ſketched them out, and ſent my little hints, ſuch as they were, to Mr. R——n. As ſoon as I had ſealed my letter, in comes Mrs. Arnold[a]—" Well, Mrs. Arnold, ſays I, this " Mr. Jago never comes—what can one do? I'm

[a] His houſe-keeper, of whom very reſpectful mention is made in the courſe of this correſpondence.

" as

" as dull as as a beetle for want of company,"
" Sir, says she, the hen"—" What makes you
" out of breath, says I, Mrs. Arnold, what's
" the matter?" " Why, Sir, says she, the hen
" that I set last-sabbath-day-was-three-weeks
" has just hatched, and has brought all her eggs
" to good." " That's brave indeed, says I."
" Ay, that it is, says she, so be and't please
" G—d an how that they liven, there'll be a
" glorious parcel of 'em. Shall I bring 'em
" up for you to see?" says she. " No, thank ye,
" Mrs. Arnold, says I; but aren't ye in some ap-
" prehensions from the kite, Mrs. Arnold?"—
" No, Sir, says she, I hope there's no danger; I
" *takes* pretty good care of 'em." " I don't ques-
" tion your care, says I; for you're seldom without
" a duck or a chicken about you."—" Poor
" pretty *creters*, says she; look here, Master,
" this has gotten a speck of black upon her
" tail."—" Ay, I thought you wern't without
" one about you, says I—I don't think, says I,
" Mrs. Arnold, but your soul was design'd for
" a hen, originally." " Why, and if I *had*
" been a hen, says she, I believe I should have
" done as much for my chickens as yonder great
" black-and-white hen does, tho' I say't that
" shou'd not say't, says she." Aye, that you
would, thought I. " Well, but now when Mr.

"Jago comes, have you got e'er a chicken that's "*fit to kill?*" "No, says she, I doubt there "is ne'er-a-one." "Well, says I, Mrs. Arnold, "you and your chicken may go down; I am "going to write a letter." So I sat down, and wrote thus far: scrattle, scrattle, goes the pen — why how now? says I — what's the matter with the pen? So I thought I would make an end of my letter, because my pen went scrattle, scrattle. Well, I warrant I shall have little pleasure when Mr. Jago *comes*; for I never fixed my heart much upon any thing in my life, but some misfortune happened to balance my pleasure.—After all, thought I, it must be some very ill accident that outweighs the pleasure I shall take in seeing him.

Leasows, July 22. W. SHENSTONE.

III. To a Friend, too ceremoniously declining to purchase a Horse for him.

Sir, 1739.

I CANNOT avoid imagining the first part of your letter was mere raillery. I am sure it gave me a good deal of pleasure (for I can bear very

very well to hear my foibles expoſed, though not my faults), and on that account muſt needs make grateful mention of it. I acknowledge the goodneſs of the letter which occaſioned it, and could not expect that ſuch an ill-formed application could have produced an anſwer ſo very oratorical. In the firſt place, you lay open the ſubject, or indeed, what you call the offices in which I am pleaſed to employ you. In the next, you alledge your own inability to enter upon matters of ſuch great concernment. That this is rhetorical, nay, pure rhetoric, I gather from the exordiums of all the declamations that I ever heard in my life. 'Tis, moreover, not uncommon with declaimers to give ſome reaſons why they ſhould not abſolutely decline the ſubject, though they are ſenſible of their inſufficiency (otherwiſe they might be expected to ſit down, and hold their tongues). And this is what you have done, by ſaying that you are unwilling to diſſent from the world in regard to the ſubjects you are engaged in. That you, therefore, choſe to ſteer a middle courſe, by that means avoiding the imputation of preſumption on the one hand, and indifference on the other. When this is done, you enter gravely upon the ſubject, and, to give it a greater perſpicuity, divide it into two parts.

The firſt part happens to be "concerning the "purchaſe of *an* horſe." On this occaſion, you inform me, that I am in a good country for horſes; and, ſecondly, that I have a number of acquaintance round about me, who are very well ſkilled in the nature of them. Now each of theſe informations ſeems, at firſt ſight, to mean no more than that I have better opportunities of knowing than the perſon who informs me, and, on this account, to err in point of ſuperfluity. But, upon ſecond thoughts, they have *this force* (to ſpeak like a grammarian); namely, that I am entirely negligent of my own affairs; and, ſecondly, that I care not whom I give trouble to, if I can but avoid it myſelf; ſo that the ſentences have really a beauty, when one ſearches beneath their ſuperficies. After you have ſaid this and more, which includes all that can be ſaid upon the ſubject, you deſcend to the ſecond diviſion, in relation to which I am too grateful to be otherwiſe than *ſerious* in my acknowledgments.

I HAD not expatiated thus far but to ſhew, that I am not inſenſible of a ſneer; nor ſhould I expatiate any farther but to prove, that I am equally ſenſible of a favour.

I DESIRE

I DESIRE you would believe, that I abſolutely aſſent to your critique. That ſome of your ſentiments were my own before I communicated the verſes; and others, as ſoon as you had favoured me with the diſcovery of them. That I would, *per præſentes*, return my thanks for them; which you might juſtly have claimed, whether I had approved them or not. One exception to this approbation my modeſty bids me mention, on account of your too great partiality in my favour. My gratitude you are entitled to without exception or limitation.

IT will, perhaps, gratify your curioſity to know, that Mr. G. has a copy of verſes in the laſt magazine, entitled, "The little Cur." There are ſeveral ſtrokes that are picturesque and humourous; I believe it was done in haſte. The motto is exquiſite, and much more properly applied by Mr. G. than the Emperor Adrian, in my opinion, notwithſtanding all that Pope ſays. Tell me your judgement of Mr. L———n's in the ſame paper. The epigram "To one who "refuſed to walk in the Park, &c." is a good one.

I HAVE

I HAVE waved ſending the verſes to Mr. Somerville at preſent, becauſe I hope to ſee you ſoon either at the Leaſows or at Birmingham. I can't tell whether I ſhall have time to incloſe in this letter my ballad. If I do, conſider it only as ſome words that I chuſe to make uſe of to ſome notes of which I am more than ordinarily fond [b]. It is as much deſigned for my own ſinging (in private I mean) as ever was a bottle of cherry-brandy for an old woman's drinking. Now I think of it, I really believe that I every day approach nearer and nearer to the capacity, the way, the inſignificancy, of an old woman. Mrs. Arnold has certainly, by her *charms*, her incantations, and her converſations together, contributed a good deal to this tranſformation. Pray come over if you can, and try to reinſtate me in my right mind, in proportion to the ſoundneſs of which I ſhall be more and more

Your friend and ſervant,

W. S.

[b] The tune "Come and liſten to my ditty, &c." The words founded upon a true hiſtory of Queen Elizabeth, who, looking from a caſtle, wherein ſhe was a priſoner, and ſeeing a country milk-maid ſinging, expreſſed great envy at the girl's condition, and diſſatisfaction with regard to her own.

IV. To

IV. To the ſame, from Town.

Dear Sir, 1739.

I RETURN you my thanks, moſt heartily, for the poetical reſentment which you have ſhewn againſt my cenſurers, the Riddle-maſters. I have ſent Mr. Somerville's verſes and yours to Cave; though I am aſhamed to own I neglected it ſo long, that, I fear, he will have no room for them this month. If you can extirpate falſe wit in a manner, you will do no ſmall ſervice to the true: you do no ſmall *honour* to it, whether you extirpate the other or not.

You have heard of the motion; have heard, probably, all that I can tell you of it. That it was ill-concerted; that it has done the oppoſition great diſſervice; that the King is now confirmed in the opinion of Sir Robert's honeſty; that the younger Mr. Pitt's ſpeech was the moſt admired on the oppoſite ſide, and Sir R—t's on the court ſide; that they did not leave the Houſe till five in the morning; that Sir R—t and P—y are ſo violent, that the Sp——r is continually calling them to order; finally, that the affair has occaſioned this print, which I addreſs to your curioſity

riosity merely, though the lines upon the Bishop are humourous enough. — Now I mention curiosity; do you take notice of the many quaint contrivances made use of to catch peoples natural inquisitiveness in the pamphlets, viz. "Are "these things so?" — "Yes, they are." — "What then?" — "The devil of a story." — "Hoy, boys." — "Up go we." — And a thousand others. — What do you think must be my expence, who love to pry into every thing of this kind? Why, truly, one shilling. My company goes to George's Coffee-house, where, for that small subscription, I read all pamphlets under a three-shilling dimensions; and, indeed, any larger ones would not be fit for coffee-house perusal. — Lord Dudley lent me two sermons, given him at the House of Lords, which I read last night. In the first, there are a great many deep animadversions delivered in a style that is tolerable; in the other, there is as great a want of common English as there is plenty of common observations. —— Have you seen the sermons on the Martyrdom and on the Fast-day? If you read either, send for the first. —— You'll find me degenerate from a gentle bard into a snarling critic, if my poem does not please (you'll say I am no very candid one at present): but let its fate be what it will, I shall lay no small

 stress

ſtreſs upon the opinion of ſome that have approved it. As it is at preſent *in keeping*, it diſcovers no uncommon impudence, and runs no very great riſque; but who can anſwer for it, when it has the graceleſſneſs to *come upon the town? — Ora pro nobis*, muſt ſoon be my motto. Its virtues and faults will there be incapable of addition or diminution, and the pious aſſiſtance of friends muſt—but I am no Roman Catholic. —The intrinſic merit of a book when it is printed, as well as the paſt life and converſation of a man that is departed, muſt damn, or give it immortality — I mean, to a certain degree. I ſcribble what comes uppermoſt, and deſire you would do the ſame. —

Yours,

W. S.

V. To a Friend, from London, deſcribing his Temper, and Manner of Living there.

From Mr. Wintle's, Perfumer, near Temple-Bar, &c. 6th Feb. 1740.

Dear Sir,

I AM now with regard to the *town* pretty much in the ſame ſtate in which I expect to be always with regard to the *world*; ſometimes exclaiming

exclaiming and railing againſt it; ſometimes giving it a good word, and even admiring it. A ſun-ſhiny day, a tavern-ſupper after a play well acted, and now and then an invigorating breath of air in the Mall, never fail of producing a chearful effect. I don't know whether I gave you any account of Quin's acting Falſtaff in my former letter: I really imagined that I ſaw you tittering on one ſide me, ſhaking your ſides, and ſometimes ſcarce containing yourſelf. You'll pardon the attitude in which I placed you, ſince it was what ſeemed *natural* at that circumſtance of time. — Comus I have once been at, for the ſake of the ſongs, though I deteſt it in any *light:* but as a *dramatic* piece the *taking* of it ſeems a *prodigy*; yet indeed *ſuch-a-one*, as was pretty tolerably accounted for by a gentleman who ſate by me in the *boxes*. This learned ſage, being aſked how he liked the play, made anſwer, "He could not tell — pretty well, he thought "— or indeed as well as any other play — he "always took it, that people only came there "to ſee and to be ſeen — for as for what "was ſaid, he owned, he never underſtood any "thing of the matter." I told him, I thought a great many of its admirers were in his caſe, if they would but own it.

On the other hand, it is amazing to consider to what an universality of learning people make pretensions here. There's not a drawer, a chair or hackney coach-man, but is politician, poet, and judge of polite literature. Chimney-sweepers damn the Convention, and black-shoe-boys cry up the genius of Shakespeare. "The "Danger of writing Verse" is a very good thing; if you have not read it, I would recommend it to you as poetical. But now I talk of learning, I must not omit an interview which I accidentally had the other night in company with Lord D— and one Mr. C—. We were taken to sup at a private house, where I found a person whom I had never seen before. The man behaved exceeding modestly and well; till, growing a little merry over a bottle (and being a little countenanced by the subject we were upon), he pulls out of his pocket about half a dozen ballads, and distributes them amongst the company. I (not finding at first they were of his own composition) read one over, and, finding it a dull piece of stuff, contented myself with observing, that it was exceedingly well *printed*. But to see the man's face on this occasion would make you pity the circumstance of an author as long as you live. His jollity ceased (as a flame would do, should you pour water upon it); and,

I be-

I believe, for about five minutes, he ſpoke not a ſyllable. At length, recovering himſelf, he began to talk about his country-ſeat, about Houghton-Hall, and ſoon after deſired a health, imagining (as I found afterwards) that Lord D— would have given Sir Robert's. But he did not, naming Sir T— L—: mine, which followed, was that of Mr. L—. Now, who do you think this ſhould be, but honeſt Ralph Freeman (at leaſt the writer of the poem ſo ſubſcribed), your father's old friend and intimate, Sir Robert's right-hand, a perſon that lives elegantly, drives ſix of the beſt horſes in town, and plays on St. John's organ: (you know Mr. L— is not only Sir Robert's greateſt enemy, but the Gazetteer's proper antagoniſt). We were invited to ſee him very civilly, and indeed the man behaved with the utmoſt good-humour, without arrogance, or any attempts at wit, which, probably, would not have been very ſucceſsful.—Aſk your father what he would ſay to me, if I ſhould join in the cauſe with his old friend, and take a good annuity under Sir Robert, which, I believe, I might have; and little encouragement, God knows, have I met with on the other ſide of the queſtion. I ſay, I believe I *might have*, becauſe I know a certain perſon gives penſions of three pound a-week to porters and the moſt illiterate,

ſtupid

ſtupid fellows you can imagine, to talk in his behalf at ale-houſes: when they ſit ſo long a time, and are as regularly relieved as one centry relieves another.—At leaſt tell him that I expect in his anſwer to my letter (which I ſhall not allow him to aſſign to you), he write ſomething to confirm me in my integrity, and to make me prefer him, and you, and honeſty, to lace, brocade, and the ſmiles of the ladies,

"Et Veneri, & cunis, & plumis Sardanapali."

but I hope to keep my Hercules in view, whether in print or manuſcript; and though I am as fond of pleaſure as moſt people, yet I ſhall obſerve the rule,

"Poſitam ſic tangere noli."

I DESIRE I may hear from you next poſt: I have a line or two, which I intend for the *ſons of utter darkneſs* (as you call them) next magazine: I would ſend them to you, for your advice; but cannot readily find them. I like every thing in Mr. Somervile's, but the running of the laſt line. I think to inſert them. Should be glad to have a line or two of *yours*, that one may

make a bold attack. I look on it as *fun*, without the leaſt emotion, I aſſure you.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful ſcribbling ſlave,

W. SHENSTONE.

VI. To the ſame at Bath, on his publiſhing his Poem of the Judgment of HERCULES.

From Mr. Wintle's,
My good friend! April 30, 1740.

I HEARTILY thank you for the ſervice, your letter did me. And a conſiderable ſervice, no doubt, it *is*, to raiſe the ſpirits of a perſon ſo habitually diſpirited as I have been for ſome time. For this, and all former favours, as the ſullen fellow ſays in Shakeſpeare, "I thank you; I am not of many words, but "I thank you."

I BEG you would ceaſe to apologize for your letters: In the firſt place, it will lay *me* under a neceſſity of doing *ſo*; and, in the next place, you

you may be assured, that no friendly letter of yours will ever be otherwise than infinitely agreeable to me.

I SENT a letter to Mr. Marriett at Bath, to be left with you at your former place of residence; you will be so kind as to give it to him.

IF I wish for a *large* fortune, it is rather for the sake of my friends than myself: or, to compromise the matter with those moralists who argue for the universality of *self-interest*, it is to gratify myself in the company, and in the gratifications, of my friends.

DR. Ratcliff has sent me a letter, which gives me much *satisfaction* in respect of my poem; notwithstanding, he cannot forbear adding, that he expects to hear, since my pen has so well adorned the fable, that my conduct will, with equal propriety and elegance, illustrate the moral. However, the simple approbation of a *sincere* man affects one more, than Pliny's panegyric could do, from a more courtly one.

THERE are several errors of the press, which neither sagacity nor vigilance itself, I now see, can prevent, and which I beg you to correct

with your pen, in a copy which I must get you to present to C— L—, together with the inclosed letter. Please to be at the expence of having it stitched in purple paper, and gilt at the edges; and I will re-pay you.

I was loitering yesterday in the coffee-room, when two persons came in, well-dressed, and called for my poem; read a page or two, and commended the four lines upon Mr. L— extremely, ("Lov'd by that prince, &c.") repeated them forty times, and, in the end, got them by heart, mentioned them to a *third* person, who said he knew of no virtue that the prince *was* fired with, and then endeavoured to mimic the prince's way of talking; but, says he, *I'll* shew *the four best lines in the poem, and then proceeded to* "'Twas youth's perplex-"ing stage, &c." which are flat enough, God knows—but to my first heroes; one of them reads, "When great Alcides to a grove retir'd." *Ay, ay, you know Mr. L— did retire, he was in the secession; read on; you'll find he mentions Delia anon. Don't you remember Mr. L— wrote a song upon Delia? but proceed— you'll find he is going to give a description of two ladies, of different characters, that were in love with Mr. L—. One was* (here he named two names, which

which I have forgot). *Upon my word, it is fine: I believe it is Pope's; but how comes Pope to praiſe himſelf there?* ("Lov'd by that bard, "&c.") *No doubt, however, it was written by Mr. Pope, or Mr. D—.*

My critics proceeded to the reading of the laſt ſimile *immediately, without* the lines preceding it, and, agreeing that it was a very good thing, called out for, "The Oeconomy of "Love." So you ſee, "Laudant *illa*, ſed *iſta* "legunt," is the caſe. A perſon cannot be ſuppoſed vain from the approbation of ſuch critics, or elſe I would not have inſerted ſuch a *commendatory* paragraph. I never enquire how my poem takes, and am *afraid* to do ſo. However, I find *ſome do* allow it to be *Mallet's*—I am impatient till I hear from you: I ſhall be here till this day fortnight; afterwards at the Leaſows—I muſt add this, "Ne, ſtudio noſtri, "*pecces*;" but at the ſame time alſo

——— "O defend,
"Againſt your judgment, your moſt faithful
"friend."

W. S.

THESE *oppoſite* petitions delineate my ſtate of mind: it is well for me that I have you at Bath.

VII. To Mr. JAGO, on the Death of his Father.

Dear Mr. Jago, Leaſows, Aug. 28, 1740.

I FIND ſome difficulty in writing to you on this melancholy occaſion. No one can be more unfit to attempt to leſſen your grief than myſelf, becauſe no one has a deeper ſenſe of the *cauſe* of your affliction. Though I would by no means be numbered by you amongſt the common herd of your acquaintance, that tell you they are ſorry, yet it were impertinent in me to mention a mere friend's concern to a perſon intereſted by ſo many more tender regards. Beſide, I ſhould be glad to alleviate your ſorrow, and ſuch ſort of condolence tends but little to promote that end. I do not chuſe to flatter you; neither could I, more eſpecially at this time; but though I could perhaps find enough to ſay to perſons of leſs ſenſe than you, I know of nothing but what your own reaſon muſt have ſuggeſted. Concern indeed may have ſuſpended the power of that faculty; and upon that pretence,

tence, I have a few things that I would ſuggeſt to you. After all, it is time alone, that *can* and *will* cure *all* afflictions, but ſuch as are the conſequence of vice; and yours, I am ſure, proceeds from a *contrary* principle.

I HEARD accidentally of this ſorrowful event, and accompanied you to London with the utmoſt concern. I wiſhed it was in my power to mitigate your griefs by ſharing them, as I have often found it in yours to augment my pleaſures by ſo doing.

ALL that I can recommend to you is, not to confine your eye to any ſingle event in life, but to take in your whole circumſtances before you repine.

WHEN you reflect that you have loſt one of the beſt of men in a father, you ought to comfort yourſelf that you had ſuch a father; to whom I cannot forbear applying theſe lines from Milton:

——— "Since to part!
"Go, heav'nly gueſt, ethereal meſſenger!
"Sent by whoſe ſovereign goodneſs we adore!
"Gentle to me and affable has been

" Thy condeſcenſion, and ſhall be honour'd ever
" With grateful'ſt memory——"

End of Book VIII, PAR. LOST.

I WOULD have you, by all means, come over hither as ſoon as you can. I will endeavour to render the time you ſpend *here* as ſatisfactory as it is in my power; and I hope you will ever look upon me as your hearty friend, through all the viciſſitudes of life.

Pray give my humble ſervice to Mrs. Jago and your brother.

I am, with the utmoſt affection,

Yours ſincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

VIII. To Mr. REYNOLDS.

Dear Sir, Leaſows, 1740.

WONDERFUL were the dangers and difficulties through which I went, the night I left you at Barels; which I looked upon as ordained by fate for the temporal puniſhment of

of obſtinacy. It was very kind, and in character, for you to endeavour to deter me from the ways of darkneſs; but having a ſort of *penchant* for needleſs difficulties, I have an undoubted right to indulge myſelf in them, ſo long as I do not inſiſt upon any one's pity. It is true, theſe ought not to exceed a certain degree; they ſhould be *lenia tormenta*; and I muſt own the labours I underwent that night, did not come within the bounds which my imagination had preſcribed. I cannot forbear mentioning one imminent danger. I rode along a conſiderable piece of water covered ſo cloſe with trees, that it was as probable I might have purſued the channel, which was dangerous, as my way out of it. Or, to put my caſe in a more poetical light, having by night intruded upon an amour betwixt a Wood-nymph and a River-god, I owed my eſcape to Fortune, who conveyed me from the vengeance which they might have taken. I put up finally at a little alehouſe about ten o'clock, and lay all night awake, counting the cords which ſupported me, which I could more ſafely ſwear to than to either bed or blanket. For farther particulars, ſee my epiſtle to the Paſtor Fido of Lapworth.—Mr. Graves ſays, he ſhould be glad to ſhew you any civilities in his power, upon his own acquaintance; and will ſerve you

as

as far as his vote goes, upon my recommendation; but is afraid, without the concurrence of ſome more conſiderable friends, your chance will be but ſmall *this* year, &c. If the former part of this news gives you any pleaſure, I aſſure you it gives me no leſs to communicate it; and this pleaſure proceeds from a principle which would induce me to ſerve you myſelf, if it ſhould ever be in my power.—I ſaw Mr. Lyttelton laſt week: he is a candidate for the county of Worceſter, together with Lord Deerhurſt; I hope Mr. Somervile will do him the honour to appear as his friend, which he muſt at leaſt think ſecond to that of ſucceeding.

I HEAR you are commenced chaplain ſince I ſaw you. I wiſh you joy of it. The chaplain's title is infinitely more agreeable than his office; and I hope the ſcarf, which is expreſſive of it, will be no dimunitive thing, no fourpenny-halfpenny piece of ribboning; but that it will

" High o'er the neck its ruſtling folds diſplay,
" Diſdain all uſual bounds, extend its ſway,
" Uſurp the head, and puſh the wig away."

I HOPE

I HOPE it will prove ominous, that my firſt letter is a congratulatory one; and if I were to have opportunities of ſending all ſuch, it would entirely quadrate with the ſincere wiſhes of

Your faithful humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mr. Somervile, Mrs. Knight, and your family.

Leaſows, Aug. 1740.

IX. To the ſame.

From Mr. Wintle's, Perfumer, at the King's Arms, by Temple-Bar, Fleet-Street, 1740.

Sir,

I AM heartily obliged to Mr. Somervile, that he will make uſe of any means to ſerve me; more eſpecially that he will take the trouble of conſulting which may be moſt effectual to that end; and I deſire you would repreſent theſe ſentiments to him in the moſt expreſſive manner.

I HAVE,

I HAVE, ſince I arrived here (which was laſt Saturday night), heard Lowe ſing, and ſeen Cibber act. The laureat ſpoke an epilogue made *upon*, and, I ſuppoſe, *by* himſelf, in which he does not only make a bare confeſſion, but an *oſtentation* of all his follies:

" Of *ſuch*, (ſays he) whoe'er demand a bill of
" fare
" May look into my life—he'll find 'em there;"

or ſome ſuch lines, I cannot accurately recollect them. I do not wonder he pleaſed extremely; but to a conſidering man there is ſomething ſtrangely diſagreeable, to hear a ſcandalous life recommended by one of his age, and as much ſatisfaction ſhewn in the review of it, as if it had been a perfect galaxy of virtues. An Athenian audience would have ſhewn their different ſentiments on this occaſion. But I am acting the part of Jeremy Collier, and indeed in ſome degree of an hypocrite, for I confeſs I was highly pleaſed with him myſelf. I have nothing to add, but a fine cloſe, if I had it; as I have not, you muſt be content with the vulgar one, that I am

Yours ſincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

X. To

X. To the ſame.

Dear Sir,

I THANK you for the favour of your laſt letter, particularly your readineſs in tranſmitting to me any thing of Mr. Somervile's. It ſo fell out, that Mr. Outing delivered to me the verſes, and I had the pleaſure of reading them, about a moment before he gave me your epiſtle.

THE town expected ſomething of importance, namely, a motion for a committee of enquiry into late meaſures, would be moved for to-day. If any thing of this nature has been carrying on, I will add an account of it before I cloſe my letter. In the mean time, it is, I believe, very credible, that Lord Orford has a continued influence over the King; and that the Duke of Argyle is ſufficiently diſguſted, to have talked of the reſignation of his poſts again.

AN odd ſtory enough the following, and I believe true! Somebody that had juſt learnt that Hor— W—'s gentleman's name was Jackſon, writes a letter to Mr. Floyer, keeper of

the Tower, intimating his master's desire to speak with him. Floyer dresses the next morning, and waits upon H—e, comes into his room,—"Sir, says Horace, I really don't know "you.—" "Sir, my name is Floyer.—" "Ay, by G—d, that may be; but, by "G—d, I don't know you for all that—" "Sir, "says he, I am keeper of the Tower—" "G—d damn your blood, says H—e, produce "your warrant—damn you, produce your war- "rant; or, by G—d, I'll kick ye down stairs—"

FRIGHTED at these threats, the gentleman retired; and in his way home had leisure to consider the joke that was put upon him, and more particularly turned upon the person to whom he was sent.

IF you direct a line to Mr. Shuckburgh's, bookseller, in Fleet-street, it will arrive agreeable to

Your humble servant,

March,
Tuesday Night. W. SHENSTONE.

MY compliments to your patron.

XI. To the ſame.

Sir, 1740

YOUR laſt letter gave me a good deal of uneaſineſs, in regard to Mr. Somervile's indiſpoſition. I hope, if he is better, you will omit no opportunity of gratifying me with the news of it. I ſhall be glad to employ you and Mr. Jago in my little rivulet before winter comes, when one muſt bid adieu to rural beauties. Thoſe charming ſcenes, which the poets, in order to render them more compleat, have furniſhed with ladies, muſt be ſtript of all their ornaments. Thoſe incomparable nymphs, the Dryads and the Nereids, which have been my conſtant companions this ſhort ſummer, will vaniſh to more pleaſing climes; and I muſt be left to ſeek my aſſiſtanee in real beauties, inſtead of imaginary ones. In ſhort, I am thinking to live part of this winter in Worceſter, or ſome other town. I was at a concert there, a very full one, lately. I obſerved Dr. Mackenzie talking to Mr. Lyttelton; and I hope, on that account, he is in his intereſt; otherwiſe Mr. Somervile would do Mr. Lyttelton great ſervice

by

by engaging him.—Mr. Lyttelton took occaſion to mention to me, the obligation he lay under to Mr. Somervile for his letter, as well as his other deſigns in his favour—that he had long received great pleaſure from that gentleman's pen, and wiſhed for the honour of his acquaintance. I told him, I believed the ſatisfaction would be mutual, or to that purpoſe. He added, that the Chace was an *extremely* beautiful poem, the beſt by far ever written on the ſubject. But now the fiddles ſqueaked, the harpſichord jingled, and the performers began to feel the divine enthuſiaſm. The god of muſic invaded them as he did the Sibyll of old:

" Deus, ecce Deus! cui talia fanti
" Ante fores, ſubito non vultus, non color
" unus,
" Non comptæ manſere comæ; ſed pectus an-
" helum,
" Et rabie fera corda tument, majorque videri,
" Nec mortale ſonans."

I AM, Sir, with all due compliments to Mr. Somervile,

Yours ſincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

XII. To

XII. To Mr. JAGO, from London, with Obſervations on the Stage, &c.

Sir, Jan. 21, 1741.

YOU ſee I am *extremely expeditious* in anſwering your letter; the reaſon of which is a very powerful one, namely, the information which I received laſt night, that it would be agreeable to you I ſhould do ſo. Pleaſe, therefore, to ſet aſide the ſum of eighteen pence, or thereabouts, for letters which you will receive whilſt I am in London; and, to make it ſeem the leſs profuſely ſquandered, conſider it amongſt any other caſual expences which you careleſsly ſubmit to, merely to gratify your curioſity.

I WENT the other night, with the greateſt expectations, to ſee "The Merry Wives of Wind-"ſor" performed at Covent-Garden. It is impoſſible to expreſs how much every thing fell below my ideas. But I have *conſidered ſince*; and I find, that my expectations were really more unjuſt than their manner of acting. *Perſons*, in order to act well, ſhould have ſomething of the author's fire, as well as a polite education. And what makes this the clearer to

me is, that you hear ten plays well read by gentlemen in company, to one that you find well performed upon the ſtage.—Nothing can be more ignorant or affected than the ſcornful airs which ſome people give themſelves at a country play; becauſe, forſooth, they have ſeen plays in town. The truth is, the chief advantage of plays in town lies entirely in the ſcenery. You ſeldom obſerve a ſet of ſtrollers without one or two actors who are quite equal to their parts; and I really know of no good one, at either of the two Theatres Royal, except Cibber, who rarely acts, and Mrs. Clive. I will add one more, in *compliance* with my *own* taſte *merely*, and that is Mr. Neal, a fellow who, by *playing the fool*, has gained my particular *eſteem*.

After the play, we had an *entertainment*; falſely ſo called! It was that of Orpheus and Eurydice, the moſt *un-muſical* thing I ever heard, and which laſted, I believe, three hours, with ſome intermixtures of Harlequin; both ſo dull, and yet heard with patience, that I was amazed, aſtoniſhed, confounded: but really a *man* of *ſenſe* ought not to be ſo; becauſe they were not calculated for *him*.

I WANT you here extremely: pray come up for a week. I ſuppoſe you will not, ſo I will not argue ſuperfluouſly. However, write ſoon; and believe that your letters are the moſt agreeable things in the world to, Sir,

Yours moſt faithfully,

W. S.

XIII. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1741.

AS I have no ſort of library in town, I find ſeveral minutes upon my hands, for which, if I employ them in ſcribbling to my friends, they are but *ſlenderly obliged* to me. I hope no friend of mine will ever be induced, by my *example*, to do any thing but avoid it; I believe no one breathing can ſay, with more truth, "Video meliora, &c." It is not from a ſpirit of jealouſy that I would adviſe my acquaintance to ſeek happineſs in the regular path of a fixed life. But, though I very highly approve it, and envy it, my particular turn of mind

would be as little satisfied with it, as it is like to be in a *different* one. Yet, however I *complain*, I must own, I have a good deal reconciled myself to this mixture of gratification and disappointment, which must be my lot, till the last totally prevails.

YET, after all, to tell you the truth, I am not pleased with being advised to retire. I was saying the other day to Mr. Outing, that I *had* been ambitious more than I was at present, and that I grew less so every day. Upon this he chimed in with me, and approved my despondency; saying, "that *he* also had been ambitious, "but found it would not do." Do you think I liked him much for this?—no—I wheeled about and said, "I did not think with him; for I should "always find myself whetted by disappointments, "and more violent in proportion to the intricacy "of the game." I spent a night with him and Mr. Meredith, and with him and Mr. Dean: in the latter party he had laid his hand upon his sword six times, and *threatened to put a dozen men to death*, one of which was Broughton the prize-fighter.—Mr. Whistler's company seldom *relieves* me on an evening; and I go to plays but *seldom*, because I intend no more to *give countenance* to the *pit*.—I have got a belt!!!

which

which distinguishes me as much as a *garter*— it captivates the eyes of all beholders, and binds their understanding in golden bandage.— I heard a pedant punning upon the word βελτιος; and a wag whispering that I was related to *Beltishazzar*. In short I may say, from the Dragon of Wantley,

"No girdle, nor belt, e'er excell'd it;
"It frightens the men in a minute:
"No maiden yet ever beheld it,
"But wish'd herself tied to me in it."

THE Dunciad is, doubtless, Mr. Pope's dotage, τε Διος ενυπνια; flat in the whole, and including, with several tolerable lines, a *number* of weak, obscure, and even punning ones. What is now read by the *whole world*, and the *whole world's wife*, is, Mr. Hervey's Letter to Sir T. Hanmer. I own my *taste* is gratified in it, as well as that *unluckiness*, natural to every one; though people say (I think idly) he is mad. For this *long* letter I shall expect *two*, soon after you have received it. Adieu!

DID you see a poem, called "Woman in "Miniature," written with spirit, but incorrect? The people that were carrying Lord Orford in

effigy, to behead him on Tower Hill, came into the box where he was, accidentally, at George's, to beg money of him, amongst others.

XIV. To Mr. ——, on his taking Orders in the Church.

Dear Sir, Leasows, June 1, 1741.

I WRITE to you out of the abundant inclination I have to hear from you, imagining that, as you gave me a direction, you might possibly expect to receive a previous letter from me. I want to be informed of the impressions you receive from your *new* circumstances. The chief aversion which some people have to orders is, what I fancy you will remove in such as you converse with. I take it to be owing partly to dress, and partly to the *avowed profession* of religion. A young clergyman, that has distinguished his genius by a composition or two of a polite nature, and is capable of dressing *himself*, and his *religion*, in a different manner from the generality of his profession, that is, without formality, is certainly a genteel

teel character. I ſpeak this not with any ſly deſign to adviſe, but to intimate, that I think you very capable of *ſhining* in a dark-coloured coat.—You muſt conſider me yet as a man of the world, and endeavouring to elicit that pleaſure from gaiety, which my reaſon tells me I ſhall never find.—It is impoſſible to expreſs how ſtupid I have been ever ſince I came home, inſomuch that I cannot write a common letter without ſix repetitions. This is the third time I have begun yours, and you ſee what ſtuff it is made up of. I muſt e'en haſten to matter of fact, which is the comfortable reſource of dull people, though, even as to that, I have nothing to *communicate*. But I would be glad to know, whether you are under a neceſſity of reſiding on week-days; and, if not, why I may not expect you a day or two at the Leaſows very ſoon.—Did you make any enquiry concerning the number of my poems ſold at Oxford? or did you hear any thing concerning it that concerns me to hear?—Will S— (for that is his true name) is the exceſs of ſimplicity and good-nature. He ſeems to have all the induſtry imaginable to divert and amuſe people, without any ambitious ends to ſerve, or almoſt any concern whether he has ſo much as a laugh allowed to his ſtories, any farther than as a laugh

is an indication that people are delighted. This, joined with his turn of thought, renders him quite agreeable. I wish it were in my power to conciliate acquaintance with half his ease.—Pray do not delay writing to me. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XV. To Mr. GRAVES, on similar Taste and Manners.

Dear Sir, The Leasows, Sept. 23, 1741.

I WAS very agreeably entertained by your last letter, as indeed I am by every one of yours. It were affectation to except a paragraph or two on account of partiality, where, to say the truth, the partiality itself pleases one. This I am very positive of, that to have a friend of your temper and taste will always give me pleasure, whether I please the world or no; but to please ever so much, without some such friendship, would, in all probability, signify but little. I shall, therefore, value any means that tend to confirm my opinion of your esteem for me, preferably to any that shew me

I am

I am merely deserving of it. After all, though a very limited number of *friends* may be sufficient, an idle person should have a large *acquaintance*; and I believe I have the least of any one that ever rambled about so much as I have done. I do not know how it is, but I absolutely despair of ever being introduced into the world. It may be objected by some (but you will not object it), that I may be acquainted with a sufficient number of people that are my *equals*, if I *will*. They may be my *equals* and *superiors*, whom they mean, for aught I care; but their conversation gives me no more pleasure than the *canking* of a goose, or the quacking of a duck, in affluent circumstances. Rather *less* indeed of the two, because the idea of the fat goose flatters one's appetite; but the *human goose* is neither fit to be heard nor eaten. I wish indeed to be *shewn into* good company; but, if I can at all distinguish the nature of my inclinations, it is more in hopes of meeting with a refined conversation, than any thing else. I do not at all insist that my genius is *better* than that of my vociferous neighbours; if it is *different*, it is a sufficient reason why I should seek such companions as suit it; and whether they are found in high or low life, is little to the purpose. But you will perhaps discern the ope-

rations

rations of *vanity* in all my endeavours; I will not disagree with you, provided you will allow *amusement* an equal share in them. It is the vanity to be intimate with men of distinguished sense, not of distinguished fortune. And this is a vanity which you should not disapprove, because it will bind me a lasting friend to you and your family.

I HAVE been over at Shiffnall, and, in order to make myself agreeable, rode a-hunting with Mr. Pitt. I confess I was somewhat diverted; and my horse was so much an enthusiast, as to be very near running headlong into a deep water. I believe, if I were to turn sportsman, I should soon break my neck, for fear the huntsman should despise me.

I WILL certainly endeavour to see you at Birmingham; but beg you would write me a long letter in the mean time; and contrive, if you can, to make it look like a packet, as your last did, for the sight thereof is exceedingly comfortable.

THOUGH my wishes will not suffer me to believe that your eyes are in the danger you represent; yet, supposing them to be only very weak, I would recommend some musical instrument,

ment, that is moſt agreeable to you. I have often looked upon muſic as my dernier reſort, if I ſhould ever diſcard the world, and turn eremite entirely. Conſider what other amuſement can make an equal impreſſion in old age.

I have filled my paper, not without difficulty, through the barrenneſs of my brain, and ſituation: my heart ever flows with the moſt warm ſtreams of gratitude and affection for you. Adieu!

W. S.

XVI. To a Friend, expreſſing his Diſſatisfaction at the Manner of Life in which he is engaged.

Dear Sir, 1741.

I WONDER I have not heard *from* you lately —*of* you indeed I have, from Mr. W—. If you could come over, probably, I might go back with you for a day or two; for my horſe I think gets rather better, and may, with indulgence, perform ſuch a journey. I want to adviſe with you about ſeveral matters:—to have your opinion about a *building* that I *have built*, and

and about a journey which I design to Bath; and about numberless things, which, as they are numberless, cannot be comprehended in this paper. I am

Your most affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

Now I am come home from a visit—every little uneasiness is sufficient to introduce my whole train of melancholy considerations, and to make me utterly dissatisfied with the life I now lead, and the life which I foresee I shall lead. I am angry, and envious, and dejected, and frantic, and disregard all present things, just as becomes a madman to do. I am infinitely pleased (though it is a gloomy joy) with the application of Dr. Swift's complaint, "that he is forced to die in a "rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole." My soul is no more suited to the figure I make, than a cable rope to a cambric needle:—I cannot bear to see the advantages alienated, which I think I could deserve and relish so much more than those that have them.—Nothing can give me patience but the soothing sympathy of a friend, and *that* will only turn my rage into simple melancholy.

lancholy.—I believe ſoon I ſhall bear to ſee nobody. I *do* hate all hereabouts already, except one or two. I will have my *dinner* brought upon my table in my abſence, and the plates fetched away in my abſence: and nobody ſhall ſee me: for I can never bear to appear in the ſame ſtupid mediocrity for years together, and gain no ground. As Mr. G— complained to me (and, I think, you too, both unjuſtly), "I am no cha-"racter."—I have in my temper ſome rakiſhneſs, but it is checked by want of ſpirits: ſome ſolidity, but it is ſoftened by vanity: ſome eſteem of learning, but it is broke in upon by lazineſs, imagination, and want of memory, &c.—I could reckon up twenty things throughout my whole circumſtances wherein I am thus tantalized. Your fancy will preſent them.—Not that all I ſay here will ſignify to *you:* I am only under a fit of diſſatisfaction, and to grumble does me good—only excuſe me, that I cure myſelf at your expence. Adieu!

XVII. To

XVII. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1741.

YOU muſt give me leave to complain of your laſt letter, three parts of which is filled with mere apology: I thought we had ſome time agreed, for our mutual emolument, to lay aſide ceremonies of this ſpecies; till I was made Poet-laureat, and you Biſhop of Wincheſter.—Why Biſhop of Wincheſter, for God's ſake? Why—becauſe—he is Prelate of the Garter—an order, in all kinds of ceremony ſo greatly abounding.—Here am I ſtill, trifling away my time, my money, and, I think, my health, which I fancy greatly inferior to what it would be in the country. Truth is, I do make ſhift to vary my days a little here; and, calling to mind the many irkſome hours, the ſtupid identity of which I have been ſo often ſick of in the country, I conclude that I am leſs *unhappy* than I ſhall find myſelf at home.—However, next month I hope to ſee the Leaſows with an appetite.—Walks in the park are now delightfully pleaſant: the company ſtays in the Mall till ten every night.—Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Woffington, Barbarini, and Mr. Garrick (happy man!) are gone

over

over to Ireland, to act there for two months.—Mr. Outing, the last time I saw him, told me how Dr. Mackenzie cured him of ever fighting with scrubs, &c. "I was just going, says he, "to kick a fellow down stairs, when the Doctor "cries out, 'Mr. Outing! hear our Scotch pro-"verb before you proceed any farther;—He "that wrestles with a t—d, whether he get or "lose the victory, is sure to be b-s—t.' I had "great difficulty (continued he) to contain my-"self till he had finished his story, but I found "it so pat that it saved the fellow's neck." I wish *I* could *cure* him as easily of these Quixotical narrations.—I know no soul in town that *has* any taste, which occasions me the spleen frequently. I remember W— and I were observing, that no creatures, though ever so loathsome, (as toads, serpents, adders, &c.) would be half so hated as ourselves, if we were to give vent to our spleen, and censure affections so bluntly as some people do. I would not venture this hint, if I did not believe you experience the same. For my part, people contradict me in things I have *studied*, and am *certain* of; and I keep silence even from *good words* (*bons mots*), though it is pain and grief to me. I must give up my *knowledge* to *pretence*, or vent it with *diffidence* to fools, or there is no peace. *These, these* are

justifiable

juſtifiable motives to wiſh for ſome degree of fame; that blind people may not bully a man that has his eyeſight into their opinion that green is red, &c. Deference from fools, is no *invidious* ambition: I dare own to you that I *have* this; and I will contend that I have no more *haughty* one.—This ſubject I could expatiate upon with pleaſure; but I ſtop: a taſteleſs fellow has ſpoiled my Mall-walk to-night, and occaſioned you ſome trouble in theſe dull obſervations.—I am

Yours affectionately,

W. SHENSTONE.

XVIII. To Mr. ——, from the Leaſows.

Dear Sir, The Leaſows, June 17th, 1741.

IF a friend of yours who lived in the fartheſt part of China were to ſend you a pinch of ſnuff wrapt up in a ſheet of writing-paper, I conceive the ſnuff would improve in value as it traveled, and gratify your curioſity extremely by the time it reached your fingers ends.—Very true—you will ſay:—why then, *that very conſi-*

deration was my inducement to write to you at this time; and that sort of progressional value is what you are to place upon my letter. For, be assured, I am not ignorant how much this my letter doth resemble a pinch of snuff in point of significancy, and that both the one and the other are what you may as well do without.—My letter is as follows.

You must know, in rainy weather, I always soothe my melancholy with the remembrance of *distant* friends only: you cannot easily conceive the high value I place upon their good qualities at such a time: so that at this very instant I am *impatient* to see you. To-morrow, if the sun shines bright, I shall only *wish* for your company as for a *very great good*. If you are unemployed when you leave Bath, I should think, you might stay some time with me this summer. Refined sense is what one is apt to value one's self upon; but really, unless one has a refined soul or two to converse with, it is an inconvenience. I have ruined my happiness by conversing with you, and a few more friends: as Falstaff says to Hal, "Company, *witty* com-"pany, has been the ruin of me!" Before I knew that pleasure, I was as contented as could be

in my ſolitude; and *now*, the *abſence* of *entertainment* is a *poſitive* pain to me. London has amuſed me a while with diverſions; but now they are paſt, and I have neither any one about me that *has* the leaſt *delicateſſe*, or that I can inſpire with the *ambition of having any*.—W— W— comes in a dirty *ſhirt*, and an old coat, without a ſtock, to pay me a viſit. He pulled out a pair of ſciſſars, and, giving them an intricate turn over his two thumbs, ſaid, that *he* could do that, and *I* could make a poem; ſome for *one* thing, ſome for another:

" Hic nigri ſuccus loliginis, hæc eſt
" Æruginis mera."

It was *ſplenetic* weather *too*. — The man is curſt who writes verſes, and lives in the country.—If his *celeſtial* part inſpires him to converſe with Juno, his *terreſtrial* one neceſſitates him to ſtoop to his landlady; ſo that he is in as diſagreeable a ſituation, as if one perſon were to pull him upwards by the *head*, and another downwards by the *tail*.—Do you never find any thing of this?—I mean, that your *pride* and your *ſocial* qualities torture you with their *different* attractions? Indeed one would always give way to the laſt, but that few are familiarity-proof, few but whom it teaches to deſpiſe one. Albeit I am conſcious of the bad influence

fluence of freedom myself; yet, whilst it tends to discover wit, humour, and sense, it only renders me more and more

Your most obedient friend and servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XIX. To the same, with an Invitation to accompany him to Town.

Dear Sir, The Leasows, Nov. 25, 1741.

THE reason why I write to you so suddenly is, that I have a proposal to make to you. If you could contrive to be in London for about a month from the end of December, I imagine you would spend it agreeably enough along with me, Mr. Outing, and Mr. Whistler. According to my calculations, we should be a very happy party at a play, coffee-house, or tavern. Do not let your supercilious friends come in upon you with their prudential maxims. Consider, you are now of the proper age for pleasure, and have not above four or five whimsical years left. You have not struck one bold stroke yet, that I know of. Saddle your mule, and let us be jogging to the great city. I will be answerable for

amuſement.—Let me have the pleaſure of ſeeing you in the pit, in a laughter as cordial and ſingular as your friendſhip. Come—let us go forth into the opera-houſe; let us hear how the eunuch-folk ſing. Turn your eye upon the lilies and roſes, diamonds and rubies; the Belindas and the Sylvias of gay life! Think upon Mrs. Clive's inexpreſſible comicalneſs; not to mention Hippeſley's joke-abounding phyſiognomy! Think, I ſay, *now*; for the time cometh when you ſhall ſay, "I have no pleaſure in them."—I am conſcious of much merit in bringing about the interview betwixt Mr. L— and Mr. S—; but merit, as Sir John Falſtaff ſays, is not regarded in theſe coſter-monger days.

Pray now do not write me word that your *buſineſs* will not allow you *ten minutes* in a fortnight to write to me; an excuſe fit for none but a cobler, who has ten children dependent upon a waxen thread. Adieu!

W. S.

To

XX. To the ſame, on occaſion of Printin gthe School-miſtreſs.

Dear Sir, 1741.

I TRUST you do not pay double poſtage for my levity in incloſing theſe decorations. If I find you do, I will not ſend you the *thatch'd-houſe* and the birch-tree, with the ſun ſetting and gilding the ſcene.—I expect a cargo of franks; and then for the beautiful picture of Lady Gainſborough, and the deformed portrait of my old ſchool-dame, Sarah Lloyd! whoſe houſe is to be ſeen as thou travelleſt towards the native home of thy faithful ſervant.—But ſhe ſleeps with her fathers; and is buried with her fathers; and—Thomas her ſon *reigneth* in her ſtead!——I have the firſt ſheet to correct upon the table. I have laid aſide the thoughts of fame a good deal in this *un-promiſing* ſcheme; and fix them upon the landſkip which is engraving, the red letter which I purpoſe, and the fruit-piece which you ſee, being the moſt ſeemly ornaments of the firſt ſixpenny pamphlet that was ever ſo highly honoured. I ſhall incur the ſame reflection with Ogilby, of having nothing good but my decorations.

I HAVE been walking in the Mall to-night.—The *Duke* was there, and was highly delighted with two dogs; and ſtared at me more enormouſly than ever Duke did before. I do not know for what reaſon; unleſs for the ſame which made him admire the *other* puppy-dogs, becauſe they were large ones.

I EXPECT that in your neighbourhood, and in Warwickſhire, there ſhould be about twenty of my poems ſold. I print it myſelf. I am not yet ſatisfied about mottoes. That printed is this, "O, quà ſol habitabiles illuſtrat oras, maxime "principum!" It muſt be ſhort, on account of the plate. I do not know but I may adhere to a very inſignificant one:

"En erit ergo
"Ille dies, mihi cum liceat *tua* dicere facta!"

I AM pleaſed with Mynde's engravings; and I can ſpeak without affectation, that ..... is not *equally* in my thoughts.—One caution I gave Mr. W—, and it is what I would give to all my friends with whom I wiſh my intimacy may continue ſo much as I wiſh it may with you. Though I could bear the *diſregard* of the town, I could not bear to ſee my friends alter their opinion, which

which they say they have, of what I write, though millions contradict them. It is an obstinacy which *I* can boast of, and they that have more sense may surely insist on the liberty of judging for themselves. If *you* should faulter, I should say you did not deserve your *capacity* to judge for yourself. Write soon—you never are at a fault—" tantummodo *incepto* opus est, cætera " res expediet." Adieu!

W. S.

XXI. To the same, from Town, on the Death of Mr. Somervile, &c.

My good friend, 1741.

OUR old friend Somervile is dead! I did not imagine I could have been so sorry as I find myself on this occasion. " Sublatum " quærimus." I can now excuse all his foibles; impute them to age, and to distress of circumstances: the last of these considerations wrings my very soul to think on. For a man of high spirit, conscious of having (at least in one production) generally pleased the world, to be plagued and threatened by wretches that are

low in every ſenſe; to be forced to drink himſelf into pains of the body in order to get rid of the pains of the mind, is a miſery which I can well conceive, becauſe I may, without vanity, eſteem myſelf his equal in point of oeconomy, and conſequently *ought* to have an eye on his misfortunes: (As you kindly hinted to me at twelve o'clock at the Feathers) I ſhould retrench;—I will; but you ſhall not ſee me:—I will not let you know that I took your hint in good part. I will do it at ſolitary times, as I may: and yet there will be ſome difficulty in it; for whatever the *world* might eſteem in poor Somervile, I really find, upon critical enquiry, that *I* loved him for nothing ſo much as his flocci-nauci-nihili-pili-fication of money.

Mr. A— was honourably acquitted: Lord A—, who was preſent, and behaved very inſolently they ſay, was hiſſed out of court. They proved his application to the carpenter's ſon, to get him to ſwear againſt Mr. A—, though the boy was proved to have ſaid in ſeveral companies (*before* he had been kept at Lord A—'s houſe) that he was ſure the thing was accidental. Finally, it is believed he will recover the title of A—ea.

THE

THE apprehenſion of the whores, and the ſuffocation of four in the round-houſe, by the *ſtupidity* of the keeper, engroſſes the talk of the town. The ſaid houſe is rebuilding every day (for the mob on Sunday night demoliſhed it), and re-demoliſhed every night. The Duke of M—gh, J— S— his brother, Lord C— G—, were taken into the round-houſe, and confined from eleven at night till eleven next day: I am not poſitive of the Duke of M—gh; the others are certain: and that a large number of people of the firſt faſhion went from the round-houſe to De Veil's, to give in informations of their uſage. The juſtice himſelf ſeems greatly ſcared; the proſecution will be carried on with violence, ſo as probably to hang the keeper, and there is an end.

LORD Bath's coachman got drunk and tumbled from his box, and he was forced to borrow Lord Orford's. Wits ſay, that it was but gratitude for my Lord Orford's *coachman* to drive my Lord Bath, as my Lord Bath *himſelf* had driven my Lord Orford. Thus they.

I HAVE

I HAVE ten million things to tell you; though they all amount to no more than that I wiſh to pleaſe you, and that I am

Your ſincere friend,

and humble ſervant.

I AM pleaſed that I can ſay I knew Mr. Somervile, which I am to thank you for.

XXII. To Mr. GRAVES, on Benevolence and Friendſhip.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. Graves, Jan. 19, 1741-2.

I CANNOT forbear immediately writing to you: the pleaſure your laſt letter gave me puts it out of my power to reſtrain the overflowings of my benevolence. I can eaſily conceive that, upon ſome extraordinary inſtances of friendſhip, my heart might be *ſi fort attendri*, that I could not bear any reſtraint upon my ability to ſhew my gratitude. It is an obſervation I made upon reading to-day's paper, which contains

contains an account of C. Khevenhuller's ſucceſs in favour of the Queen of Hungary. To think what ſublime affection muſt influence that poor unfortunate Queen, ſhould a faithful and zealous General revenge her upon her enemies, and reſtore her ruined affairs!

HAD a perſon ſhewn an eſteem and affection for *me*, joined with any elegance, or without any elegance in the expreſſion of it, I ſhould have been in acute pain till I had given ſome ſign of my willingneſs to ſerve him.—From *all* this, I conclude that I have more humanity than ſome others.

PROBABLY enough I ſhall never meet with a larger ſhare of happineſs than I feel at preſent. If not, I am thoroughly convinced, my pain is greatly ſuperior to my pleaſure. That pleaſure is not abſolutely dependent on the mind, I know from this, that I have enjoyed happier ſcenes in the company of ſome friends, than I can poſſibly at preſent;—but alas! all the time you and I ſhall enjoy together, abſtracted from the reſt of our lives, and lumped, will not perhaps amount to a ſolid year and a half. How ſmall a proportion!

PEOPLE

PEOPLE will ſay to one that talks thus, "Would you die?" To ſet the caſe upon a right footing, they muſt take away the hopes of greater happineſs in *this* life, the fears of greater miſery hereafter, together with the bodily *pain* of dying, and addreſs me in a diſpoſition betwixt mirth and melancholy; and I could eaſily reſolve them.

I DO not know how I am launched out ſo far into this complaint: it is, perhaps, a ſtrain of conſtitutional whining; the effect of the wind—did it come from the winds? to the winds will I deliver it:

"Tradam protervis in mare Creticum,
"Portare ventis—"

I WILL be as happy as my fortune will permit, and make others ſo:

"Pone me pigris ubi *nulla campis*
"*Arbor* æſtiva recreatur aura."

I WILL be ſo. The joke is, that the deſcription which you gave of that country was, that you had few trees about you; ſo that I ſhould *trick* fortune if ſhe ſhould grant my petition implicitly.

implicitly. But in earneſt, I intend to come and ſtay a day or two with you next ſummer.

Mr. Whiſtler is at Mr. Goſling's, bookſeller, at the Mitre and Crown, in Fleet-ſtreet, and enquired much after you in his laſt letter to me. He writes to me; but I believe his affection for one weighs leſs with him, while the town is in the other ſcale. Though he is very obliging. I do not know whether I do right, when I ſay I believe we three, that is, in ſolitary circumſtances, have an equal idea of, and affection for, each other. I ſay, ſuppoſing each to be alone, or in the country, which is nearly the ſame; for ſcenes alter minds as much as the air influences bodies. For inſtance, when Mr. Whiſtler is in town, I ſuppoſe we love him better than he does us; and when we are in town, I ſuppoſe the ſame may be ſaid in regard to him.

The true burleſque of Spenſer (whoſe characteriſtic is ſimplicity) ſeems to conſiſt in a *ſimple* repreſentation of ſuch things as one laughs to *ſee* or to *obſerve* one's ſelf, rather than in any *monſtrous* contraſt betwixt the thoughts and words. I cannot help thinking that my added ſtanzas have more of his manner than what you

ſaw

ſaw before, which you are not a judge of, till you have read him.

W. S.

XXIII. To the ſame, with ſome Obſervations on SPENSER.

Leaſows,
Dear Sir, the Day before Chriſtmas.

THOUGH your laſt letter ſeemed to put my correſpondence upon an oſtentatious footing, namely, an inclination to be witty, yet I aſſure you it was not any punctilious conſideration of that kind that has kept me ſo long ſilent. Indeed with ſome people one would ſtand upon the niceſt punctilios; for though ceremony be altogether lighter than vanity itſelf, yet it ſurely weighs as much as the acquaintance of the undeſerving. But this is trifling, becauſe it can have no reference to a perſon for whom I have the greateſt affection.

IN regard to my Oxford affairs, you did all I could expect. I have wrote ſince to Mr. M—, who,

who, either for your ſake or mine, will, I dare ſay, ſettle them to my ſatisfaction.

I WISH your journey and head-ach would have permitted you to have been a little more particular concerning the ſeat of the Muſes; but I ſuppoſe nothing material diſtinguiſhed your fortnight.

MR. Whiſtler has relapſed at Whitchurch; but purpoſed, when I laſt heard from him, to go to London before this time. I do not entirely underſtand his ſchemes, but ſhould have been ſincerely glad of his company with me this winter; and, he ſays, he is not fond of London.—For my part, I deſigned to go thither the next month, but the fever (which is chiefly violent in towns) diſcourages me.

SOME time ago, I read Spenſer's Fairy Queen; and, when I had finiſhed, thought it a proper time to make ſome additions and corrections in my trifling imitation of him, the School-miſtreſs.—His ſubject is certainly bad, and his action inexpreſſibly confuſed; but there are ſome particulars in him that charm one. Thoſe which afford the greateſt ſcope for a ludicrous imitation are, his ſimplicity and obſolete phraſe; and yet theſe are what

give

give one a very ſingular pleaſure in the peruſal. The burleſque which they occaſion is of quite a different kind to that of Philips's Shilling, Cotton's Traveſtie, Hudibras, or Swift's works; but I need not tell *you* this. I incloſe a copy, for your amuſement and opinion; which, if franks are plentiful, you may return, and ſave me the *tedious* trouble of writing it over again. The other paper was, *bona fide*, written to divert my thoughts from pain, for the ſame reaſon that I ſmoaked; actions equally reputable.

MR. Somervile's poem upon hawking, called, "Field Sports," I ſuppoſe, is out by this time. It was ſent to Mr. Lyttelton, to be read to the Prince, to whom it was inſcribed. It ſeems, he is fond of hawking.

I HAVE often thought thoſe to be the moſt enviable people whom one leaſt envies—I believe, married men are the happieſt that are; but I cannot ſay I envy them, becauſe they loſe all their merit in the eyes of other ladies.

I BEG ſincerely that you would write in a week's time at furtheſt, that I may receive your letter *here*, if I ſhould go from home this winter. I will

I will never uſe any thing by way of concluſion, but your old Roman

Farewel!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXIV. To the ſame, with a Continuation of the ſame Subject.

Dear Mr. Graves! June, 1742.

I AM glad the ſtay you make in Herefordſhire amuſes you, even though it puts you upon preferring the place you reſide at to my own place of reſidence. I do not know whether it be from the prejudice of being born at the Leaſows, or from any real beauty in the ſituation; but I would wiſh no other, would ſome one, by an addition of two hundred pounds a year, put it in my power to exhibit my own deſigns. It is what I can now do in no other method than on paper. I live in ſuch an un-œconomical manner, that I muſt not indulge myſelf in the plantation of a tree for the future. I have glutted myſelf with the extremity of ſolitude, and muſt

adapt my expences more to ſociable life. It is on this account that it ſeems more prudent for me to buy a chair, while I am in town, than to carry down twelve guineas for the model of the tomb of Virgil, an urn, and a ſcheme or two more of like nature.—I long to have my picture, *diſtantly* approaching to a profile (the beſt manner I can think of to expreſs myſelf), drawn by Daviſon. I have ſeen your ſiſter's, and think the *face* well done in every reſpect;—but am greatly indignant with other things of a leſs fixed nature. The cap, though a good cap enough, has a vile effect; the formality of ſtays, &c. not agreeable. —I do not know if you ſaw the picture of a Scotch girl there at full length! Miſs Graves has the advantage of her's, or any picture there, in her perſon; but certainly this girl's hair is inexpreſſibly charming! There is the genteeleſt negligence in it I ever ſaw in any picture:—what follows, but that I wiſh your ſiſter would give orders to pull off her cap, and have hair after the manner of this picture?—To ſpeak abruptly; as it *is*, I diſapprove it: were it altered, I ſhould like it beyond any I ever ſaw.—I am glad you are reading Spenſer: though his plan is deteſtable, and his *invention* leſs wonderful than moſt people imagine, who do not much conſider the obviouſneſs of allegory; yet, I think, a perſon of

your disposition must take great delight in his *simplicity*, his good-nature, &c. Did you observe a stanza that begins a canto somewhere,

"Nought is there under heav'n's wide hollowness
"That breeds," &c.

When I bought him first, I read a page or two of the Fairy Queen, and cared not to proceed. After that, Pope's Alley made me consider him ludicrously; and in that light, I think, one may read him with pleasure. I am now (as Ch—mley with —), from trifling and laughing at him, really in love with him. I think even the metre pretty (though I shall never use it in earnest); and that the last Alexandrine has an extreme majesty.—Does not this line strike you (I do not justly remember what canto it is in);

"Brave thoughts and noble deeds did *evermore*
"inspire."

Perhaps it is my fancy only that is enchanted with the running of it. Adieu!

W. S.

XXV. To the ſame, on the Publication of the School-miſtreſs.

Dear Mr. Graves!

I DEPENDED a good deal on an immediate anſwer from you, and am greatly fearful you never received a packet of little things, which I ſent you to Oxford, incloſed in a frank; though, if it arrived at all, it muſt have arrived ſeveral days before you left it. I beſeech you to ſend me a line upon the receipt of theſe, which will free me from much perplexity; though it is doubtful whether I can defer my ſchemes ſo as to make your criticiſms of ſervice. I would have you ſend them notwithſtanding.

I CANNOT help conſidering myſelf as a ſportſman (though God knows how poor a one in every ſenſe!) and the company as my game. They *fly up* for a little time; and then *ſettle* again. My cue is, to diſcharge my *piece* when I obſerve a number together. This week, they are ſtraggling round about their paſture, the town: the next, they will flock into it with violent appetites; and then I diſcharge my little piece amongſt them.—I aſſure you, I ſhall be very eaſy about the

the acquisition of any fame by this thing; all I much wish is, to lose none: and indeed I have so little to lose, that this consideration scarcely affects me.

I DARE say it must be very incorrect; for I have added eight or ten stanzas within this fortnight. But inaccuracy is more excusable in ludicrous poetry than in any other. If it strikes *any*, it must be merely people of *taste*; for people of *wit* without taste (which comprehends the larger part of the critical tribe) will unavoidably despise it. I have been at some pains to secure myself from A. Philips's misfortune, of mere *childishness*, "little charm of placid mien, "&c." I have added a ludicrous index, purely to shew (fools) that I am in jest:—and my motto "O quà sol habitabiles illustrat oras, maxime "principum", is calculated for the same purpose. You cannot conceive how large the number is of those that mistake burlesque for the very foolishness it exposes (which observation I made once at the Rehearsal, at Tom Thumb, at Chrononhotonthologos; all which are pieces of elegant humour). I have some mind to pursue this caution further; and advertize it, "The School-mistress, "&c." A very *childish* performance every body knows (*novorum more*). But if a person seri-

ously calls this, or rather, burlesque, a childish or low species of poetry, he says wrong. For the most regular and formal poetry may be called trifling, folly, and weakness, in comparison of what is written with a more *manly* spirit in ridicule of it.—I have been plagued to death about the ill execution of my designs.—Nothing is certain in London but expence, which I can ill bear. Believe me, *till death*,

Yours, sincerely and particularly,

W. SHENSTONE.

XXVI. To the same; with a humourous Description of his Conduct in regard to Form and Equipage.

Dear Sir, The Leasows, Nov. 1742.

PRESUMING you may be at Tissington by this time, I write to solicit a description of the several adventures, accidents, and phænomena, that have amused you in your travels; and will *equally* affect me, as they relate to you. Above all things, be particular in regard to your calculations respecting Mickleton. I would have

certainly

certainly met you there, as you desired me: there is no company I am fonder of than yours, and your sisters; and no place at which I have spent more agreeable hours than Mickleton. But your brother has lost one of his recommendations in my eye; that is, his *irregularity* of house-keeping. He has several left, which are sufficient to preserve my utmost esteem; but that was a jewel indeed! I love to go where there is nothing much more in form than myself. I have no objection to visit *young, unsettled people*, with a mountebank's inconsistency in my equipage. But where a considerable family keeps up its forms (as marriage requires), I should not care to appear with an hired horse, and a *Sancho* for my valet. The case is, I *could* live in a way genteel enough, and uniformly so; but then, I must forego megrims, whims, toys, and so forth. Now, though it gives me pain, *sometimes*, not to appear of a piece; yet that *infrequent* pain is not a balance for the substantial happiness which I find in an urn, a seal, a snuff-box, an engraving, or a bust. Ambition, too, as it puts me upon wishing to make a figure, makes me very indifferent as to making a common, every-day-gentlemanly figure; and saves

me from appearing ſolicitous about the "res "*mediocriter* ſplendidæ," by raiſing my imagination *higher*. I pour out my vanity to you in cataracts; but I hope you will rather conſider it as a mark of my *confidence*, and, conſequently, my ſincere eſteem and affection: for, I take it, the former ſeldom ſubſiſts without the latter. And as to what I ſaid about my love of flattery, I hope, you will not conſtrue it as any *hint*; neither, if I am right, would you be ſo ungenerous as to comply with me. I ſincerely think, that flattery amongſt foes is abſolutely deſirable; amongſt one's *common acquaintance*, a behaviour *rather inclining* to it: but amongſt *friends*, its conſequences are of too dangerous a nature.

I AM ſo unhappy in my wintery, unviſited ſtate, that I can almoſt ſay with Dido, "tædet "cœli convexa tueri." I am miſerable, to think that I have not thought enough to amuſe me. I walk a day together; and have no idea, but what comes in at my eyes. I long for ſome ſubject about the ſize of Philips's Cyder, to ſettle heartily about; ſomething that I could enrich by epiſodes drawn from the Engliſh hiſtory: *Stonehenge* has ſome of the advantages I like; but ſeems a dead, lifeleſs title. If you chance to think

think of a ſubject which you do not chuſe to *adorn* yourſelf, ſend it me to *write upon*.

I SHALL be vaſtly deſirous to ſee you here in ſpring; and am in hopes Whiſtler will ſtay a month with me. I have ſent an imperious letter about his dilatory correſpondence.—He mentioned you in his laſt letter; was going to Oxford; thence to London: where, if he ſtays till February, I may ſee him. I hope you will write the very next poſt: you cannot oblige me, or pleaſe me more, than by ſo doing; if you think I deſerve to be pleaſed, or am worth obliging. Adieu!

W. S.

XXVII. To the ſame, from Town; with a Specimen of Plays and Politics.

Dear Mr. Graves,

From Mr. Shuckburgh's, Bookſeller, in Fleetſtreet, your Brother's Lodgings, about 1743.

I HAVE juſt been ſpending my evening at a coffee-houſe; and, notwithſtanding the confuſed effect of liquor, am ſitting down to write to a perſon

a perſon of the cleareſt head I know. The *truth* is, I write to pleaſe *myſelf*, which I can do no other way ſo effectually; upon which account, you are obliged to me for the *advances* I make in correſpondence. Extraordinary things will be expected from my *ſituation*; but extraordinary things ought never to be expected from *me*. I keep no political company, nor *deſire* any, as, I believe, you know. If you enquire after the ſtage,—I have not ſeen Garrick; but, more fortunately for *you*, your brother *has*. Me nothing has ſo much tranſported as young Cibber's *exhibition* of Parolles, in Shakeſpear's "*All's* "*well that ends well.*" The character is admirably written by the author; and, I fancy, I can diſcover a great number of hints which it has afforded to Congreve in his Bluff. I am apt to think a perſon, after he is twelve years old, laughs annually leſs and leſs: leſs heartily, however; which is much the ſame. I think Cibber elicited from me as ſincere a laugh as I can ever recollect. Nothing, ſure, can be comparable to his repreſentation of Parolles in his bully-character; except the figure he makes as a ſhabby gentleman. In his firſt dreſs he is tawdry, as you may imagine: in the laſt, he wears a ruſty black coat, a black ſtock, a black wig with a Ramillie, a pair of black gloves; and a face!—

which

which causes five minutes laughter.——Instead of politics, I have transcribed these epigrams from the Evening Post—though I hate transcribing:

"The CHOICE, to Sir ROBERT ———

"When opposition against power prevail'd;
"When artful eloquence and bribery fail'd;
"Timely you quit the ship you could not steer,
"Disdain the commons, and ascend a peer:
"Conscious that you deserve to *bleed* or *swing*,
"You chuse the axe as nobler than the string."

"The OPPOSITION.

"With huge Antæus as Alcides strove,
"The son of Neptune one, and one of Jove,
"Oft as he threw the giant on the ground,
"His strength redoubled by the fall he found:
"Th' unwieldy monster, sprung of mother
"Earth,
"From *her* had vigour, as from her he'd birth:
"Enrag'd, the hero a new method tries;
"High lifts in air, and, as he mounts, he dies."

I THINK the last a good thought; the first not a bad one, and what I have had in my head a thousand

thouſand times. I ſaw Mr. Fitzherbert at Nando's, but choſe not to reconnoitre him there, though to aſk after *you*. I purpoſe waiting on him at his lodgings, for the ſame end. Pray write ſoon to me. I wiſh I could ſay more to deſerve it from you—I would fain deviate from the common road in every letter I ſend you; but am ſo very uniformly your friend, that I cannot vary my manner of expreſſing how *much* I am ſo, which is all my letters aim at. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXVIII. To the ſame, with various Schemes of Compoſition.

Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 1743.

YOU ſay it is no way unpleaſing to you to receive my letters; if you ſay the thing that is not, the fault, like others, produces its own puniſhment.—You are now my only correſpondent. I do not know what reaſon Whiſtler has for not caring to write, unleſs he thinks that we ought not to trouble ourſelves about one another, but bend our whole endeavours to mend our

our fortunes; though I do not *know* his imaginations. I was afraid, after what I had ſaid concerning *fameneſs* in my laſt, that you would interpret it to your own diſadvantage; but was too lazy to write my letter again, truſting that I could deny the extent of my complaint to any one beſides myſelf in ſome future letter. There is as much variety in your genius, as fortune can introduce into your circumſtances.

Some time next week, do I purpoſe to ſet out for London. The reaſons for my going at all do *barely* preponderate. I cannot, *conſcientiouſly*, print any thing. I have two or three little matters in hand: none that I am greatly fond of, much leſs that are at all mature. One is, what you have ſeen, though in its mortal ſtate, "Flattery, or the fatal Exotic;"—ſo very quotidian and copious a ſubject, that I diſlike it entirely. Another, "Elegies in Hammond's Me-"tre," but upon *real* and natural ſubjects: this I have objections to. A third, "An Eſſay on "Reſerve;" the ſubject genteel, I think, but ſcarce ten lines finiſhed. A fourth, "An Eſſay, "in blank Verſe, on Oeconomy, with Advice to "Poets on that Head, concluding with a ludi-"crous Deſcription of a Poet's Apartment." I think it were better to *annex* that poem thus,

to

to prevent its clashing, like an earthen pot, against Philips's silver vase, though his humour lies chiefly in the language. My favourite scheme is a poem, in blank verse, upon Rural *Elegance*, including cascades, temples, grottos, hermitages, green-houses, which introduces my favorite episode of the Spanish lady (you will wonder *how*, but I think *well)* to close the first book. The next, running upon planting, &c. will end with a vista terminated by an old abbey, which introduces an episode concerning the effects of Romish power, interdicts, &c. in imitation of Lucretius's "Plague of Athens," taken from Thucydides, Virgil's Murrain, and Ovid's Pestilence, &c. The two episodes in great forwardness;—but, alas! I do not like formal didactic poetry, and shall never be able to finish aught *but* the episodes, I doubt: unless I allow myself to treat the rest in *my own* manner, transiently—as Camilla skimmed over the wheat-stubble.

I HAVE altered this ballad, you see; I doubt, not to your mind: but send your criticisms, and I will be all obedience. From London I will send you mine on your more important poem; your critique will be important upon my silly affair; mine silly, I am afraid, upon your momentous one—

but

but you do not think it momentous, as you ought. Direct to Nando's. I am

Your most sincere and affectionate friend

and humble servant,

W. S.

I QUESTION whether I should be more unhappy in any mere *mechanical* employment; for instance, making nails (which seems to deal as much in *repetition* as any trade), than I am in great part of my time when my head is unfit for study.—My neighbour is gone to London, and has left me a legacy of franks, so I shall be able to return your poem, &c. at least by parcels. I strenuously purpose to be there (or to set out) next week; but, as I *am* here at present, I think you ought to pay some deference to the *vis inertiæ*, at least to the centripetal force of matter, and direct to the Leasows one more letter, with your opinion concerning the various readings in the trifle I inclose, writing the first post that you well can.—Once more adieu!

Feb. 16, 1743.

XXIX. To

XXIX. To the ſame.

Dear Mr. Graves, 1743.

DR. Swift would not have ſcrupled to print your parody, with his name to it. Why ſhould you, *without* your name? I had a violent inclination to print it in a large folio, four leaves, price four-pence: but I dare not do it, for fear you ſhould think it of evil importance with regard to the clergy. You excell me infinitely in a way in which I take moſt pleaſure; odd picturesque deſcription. Send me word whether I ſhall print it or no—and that right ſoon.—I have lingered in town till now, and did not receive your letter till this morning.—I do not know whether I ſhall ſend you with this letter a little thing which I wrote in an afternoon, and, with proper *demands* of being concealed as the author, ſold for two guineas. Next time I am in town, I will get money like a haberdaſher. I will amuſe myſelf with finding out the people's weak ſide, and ſo furniſh them with *ſuitable nonſenſe*.—I would have you do the ſame.—Make your wit bear your charges. Indeed, as to the little parody you ſend, it would fix your reputation with men of ſenſe as much as (greatly more than) the whole tedious character

of

of Parſon Adams. I read it half a year ago; the week after I came to town; but made Mr. Shuckburgh take it again, imagining it altogether a very mean performance.—I liked a tenth part pretty well; but, as Dryden ſays of Horace, (unjuſtly) he ſhews his teeth without laughing: the greater part is *unnatural* and *unhumourous*. It has ſome advocates; but, I obſerve, thoſe not ſuch as I ever eſteemed taſters. Finally, what makes *you endeavour* to like it?

My printer was preparing his bill for the School-miſtreſs, when I ſtopped him ſhort, with a hint to go to Dodſley, who has not yet reckoned with me for Hercules. Let *the dead* bury their *dead*. Dr. Young's Complaint is the beſt thing that has come out this ſeaſon (theſe *twenty years*, Pope ſays) except mine, for ſo *thinks* every author, who does think proper to ſay ſo: poor Pope's hiſtory, in Cibber's Letter, and the print of him upon the Mount of Love (the *coarſeſt* is moſt *humourous*), muſt ſurely mortify him. Your ſiſter does me great honour to think my hint any thing; but I am quite zealous in my approbation of that Scotch lady's hair. I will *ever* aim at *oddneſs*, for the future; it is cheaper to follow taſte than faſhion, and whoever he be that devotes himſelf to *taſte* will be *odd* of

courſe.—You ſend me the verſes on Lord Ilay: they were hacked about town three months ago, and I ſaw them. The town is certainly the ſcene for a man of curioſity.—I do not purpoſe to be long away; but I muſt think of retrenching.—I have ten thouſand things to tell you, but I have not room. Such people as *we* ſhould meet as regularly to compare notes as tradeſmen do to ſettle accounts, but oftener; there is no good comes of long reckonings;—I ſhall forget half—I think it ſhould be four days in a fortnight—it would not do;—it would make one *mindful* of, and conſequently more uneaſy on account of, abſence. Every one gets poſts, preferments, but myſelf.—Nothing but my ambition can ſet me on a footing with them, and make me eaſy. Come then, lordly pride! &c. The devil thought with me in Milton,

"*All* is not loſt, th' unconquerable will,
"And ſtudy never to ſubmit or yield."

I HAVE been in new companies; but I ſee no reaſon to contradict my aſſertion, that I find none I like *equally* with *you*. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXX. To

XXX. To Mr. JAGO, from London.

Dear friend, 1743.

I SHALL ſend you but a very few lines, being ſo much indiſpoſed with a cold, that I can ſcarce tell how to connect a ſentence. I am juſt got into lodgings at a gold-ſmith's—a dangerous ſituation, you will ſay, for *me*; "Actum "eſt, ilicet, periiſti!" Not ſo;—for of late I have not ſo violent a taſte for toys as I have had; and I can look even on ſnuff-boxes "oculo "irretorto."

LONDON is really dangerous at this time; the pick-pockets, formerly content with mere *filching*, make no ſcruple to knock people down with bludgeons in *Fleet-ſtreet* and the *Strand*, and that at no later hour than eight o'clock at night: but in the Piazzas, Covent-garden, they come in large bodies, armed with couteaus, and attack whole parties, ſo that the danger of coming out of the play-houſes is of ſome weight in the oppoſite ſcale, when I am diſpoſed to go to them oftener than I ought.—There is a poem of this ſeaſon, called "The Pleaſures of Ima-"gination," worth your reading; but it is an

expenſive quarto; if it comes out in a leſs ſize, I will bring it home with me. Mr. Pope (as Mr. Outing, who has been with Lord Bolingbroke, informs me) is at the point of death.—My Lord Carteret ſaid yeſterday in the houſe, "That "the French and Spaniards had actually *ſaid*, "they would attempt a ſecond invaſion."—There is a new play acted at Drury Lane, "Ma-"homet," tranſlated from the French of Voltaire; but I have no great opinion of the ſubject, or the original author as a poet; and my diffidence is rather improved by the teſtimony of thoſe who have ſeen it.—I lodge between the two coffee-houſes, George's and Nando's, ſo that I partake of the expenſiveneſs of both, as heretofore. I have no acquaintance in town, and but ſlender inducement to ſtay; and yet, probably, I ſhall loiter here for a month.

T— H— was knighted againſt his will, and had a demand made upon him for an hundred pounds before he could get out of St. James's; ſo ſoon are felt the inconveniencies of grandeur!—He came out of the court in a violent rage, "G—d! Jack, what doſt think?—I am "knighted!—the devil of a knight, e'faith!" I believe he was ſincere in his diſguſt; for there had been two barge-maſters knighted in his neighbourhood ſome time before.

I SAW,

I saw, coming up, Lady Fane's grotto, which, they say, cost her five thousand pounds; about three times as much as her *house* is worth. It is a very beautiful disposition of the finest collection of shells I ever saw—Mr. Powis's woods, which are finer.—Mean time, if I had three hundred pounds to lay out about the Leasows, I could bring my ambition to peaceable terms. I am, dear Sir, with all affection, yours and Mrs. Jago's.

W. Shenstone.

Write soon. It is this moment reported that Pope is dead.

XXXI. To the same.

Dear Sir, 1743.

I long heartily to talk over affairs with you *tête à tête*; but am an utter enemy to the fatigue of transcribing what might pass well enough in conversation.—I shall say nothing more concerning my departure from L—, than that it was necessary, and therefore excusable.—

I have been ſince with a gentleman upon the borders of Wales, Biſhop's Caſtle, from whence I made a digreſſion one day beyond Offa's Dyke: ſaw mountains which converted all that I *had* ſeen into mole-hills; and houſes which changed the Leaſows into Hampton Court: where they talk of a glazed window as a piece of magnificence; and where their higheſt idea of his Majeſty is, that he can ride in ſuch a coach as 'Squire Jones or 'Squire Pryce's. The woman of the inn, at one place, ſaid, "Glaſs (in "windows) was very genteel, that it was; but "ſhe could not afford ſuch finery."

You agree with the reſt of the married world in a propenſity to make proſelytes. This inclination in ſome people gives one a kind of dread of the matter. They are ill-natured, and can only wiſh one in their own ſtate becauſe they are unhappy; like perſons that have the plague, who, they ſay, are ever dextrous to propagate the infection. I make a contrary concluſion when *you* commend marriage, as you ſeem to do, when you wiſh Miſs — may reconcile me to more than the *name* of wife. I know not what you have heard of my amour: probably *more* than I can thoroughly confirm to you. And what if I ſhould ſay to you, that marriage

marriage was not once the ſubject of our converſation?

—— "Nec conjugis unquam
"Prætendi tædas, aut hæc in fœdera veni."

Do not you think every thing in nature ſtrangely improved ſince you were married, from the tea-table to the *warming-pan?*

I WANT to ſee Mrs. Jago's hand-writing, that I may judge of her temper; but ſhe muſt write ſomething in my praiſe. Pray ſee you to it, in your next letter.

I COULD parodize my Lord Carteret's letter from Dettingen, if I had it by me. "Mrs. "Arnold (thanks be praiſed!) has this day gained "a very conſiderable victory. The ſcold laſted "two hours. Mrs. S—e was poſted in the hall, "and Mrs. Arnold upon the ſtair-caſe; which "ſuperiority of ground was of no ſmall ſervice "to her in the engagement. The fire laſted "the whole ſpace, without intermiſſion; at the "cloſe of which, the enemy was routed, and "Mrs. Arnold kept the field."

DID you hear the ſong to the tune of "The "Cuckow?"

"The Baron ſtood behind a tree,
"In woeful plight, for nought heard he
"But Cannon, Cannon, &c.
"O word of fear!
"Unpleaſing to a German ear."

THE notes that fall upon the word "Can-"non," expreſs the ſound with its echo admirably.

I SEND you my paſtoral elegy (or ballad, if you think that name more proper), on condition that you return it with ample remarks in your next letter: I ſay "return it," becauſe I have no other copy, and am too indolent to take one. Adieu!

W. S.

XXXII. To Mr. GRAVES, describing his Situation, and State of Health, &c.

Dear Mr. Graves, The Leasows.

TO-MORROW morning I set out for Cheltenham, to make trial of the waters there. I shall, perhaps, add to this letter at several stages, and conclude it at the place to which I am going; so that, like those springs, you may, perhaps, find it impregnated with the nature of all those places through which it passes; perhaps quite the contrary.

——, if I mistake not the man, is an encourager of works of taste, &c. though I am going to instance this oddly: he was a hearty stickler for my poem upon Hercules at Bath, as D. Jago sent me word. Perhaps it was complaisance to Mr. Lyttelton, with whom, Charles, &c. he is intimate, if, as I said before, I do not mistake the person. I flatter myself, I do not; and I hope that we two shall ever find the same persons, or the same kind of persons, our friends, and also our enemies.

If I get over this ill habit of body, depend upon it, I *will* have a *reverend* care of my health, as Sir John Falſtaff adviſes the Chief Juſtice. I ſolve all the tempeſts that diſturb my conſtitution into *wind:* it plagues me, firſt, in the ſhape of a bad appetite, then indigeſtion, then lowneſs of ſpirits and a flux of pale water, and at night by watchings, reſtleſſneſs, twitchings of my nerves, or a ſleep more diſtracted than the moſt active ſtate of watchfulneſs. But I think purging leſſens all theſe ſymptons, and I truſt my ſcheme that I am entering upon is right.

I was, on Monday, at Hagley, to wait on Mr. Lyttelton, who was gone to Sir John Aſtley's, to ſee his grand edifice.—As to Mrs. Lyttelton, if her affability is not artificial, I mean, if it does not owe its original (as it *ought to do* its *management)* to art, I cannot conceive a perſon more amiable;—but *ſenſe* and *elegance* cannot be feigned: to *exhibit* them, is to *have* them.

How is my ſong ſet? Miſs Carrington procured it that favour; but I have never ſeen a copy, nor knew of its being to be printed. Howard has

has ſet another of mine, which I received laſt poſt; but my harpſichord is out of order, and I have found no one yet to explain the hieroglyphics which convey it. You may probably find it in ſome future number of the Britiſh Orpheus. "By the ſide of a ſtream, &c."

I AM in as good ſpirits this inſtant as ever I was in my life: only "Mens turbidum lætatur." My head is a little confuſed; but I often think ſeriouſly, that I ought to have the moſt ardent and *practical* gratitude (as the Methodiſts chuſe to expreſs themſelves) for the advantages that I have: which, though not eminently ſhining, are ſuch, to ſpeak the truth, as ſuit my particular humour, and, conſequently, deſerve all kind of acknowledgement. If a poet ſhould addreſs himſelf to God Almighty, with the moſt earneſt thanks for his goodneſs in allotting him an eſtate that was over-run with ſhrubs, thickets, and coppices, variegated with barren rocks and precipices, or floated three parts in four with lakes and marſhes, rather than ſuch an equal and fertile ſpot as the "ſons of men" delight in; to my apprehenſion, he would be guilty of no abſurdity.—But of this I have compoſed a kind of prayer, and intend to write a little ſpeculation on the ſubject; this kind of gratitude

titude. I assuredly ought to have, and have. For my health, if one reflects, a country-fellow's stock of it would be unfit for solitude; would dispose one rather to bodily feats, and, what Falstaff calls in Poins, *gambol* faculties, than mental contemplations, and would give one that kind of pain which springs from *impatience*. My constitution was given me originally good; and with regard to it now (as G. Barnwell says) "What am I?—What *I have made myself*." Or, to speak with Milton,

"Him after all disputes
"Forc'd I absolve: all my evasions vain,
"And reasonings, tho' thro' mazes, only lead
"But to my own conviction. First and last
"On me, me only, as the source and spring
"Of all corruption, all the blame lights due."

Though this is but vulgarly expressed in Milton neither.

Jago has been here this last week, and I drove him to Dudley Castle, which I long to shew you: I never saw it (since I was the size of my pen) before: it has great romantic beauty, though perhaps Derbyshire may render it of small note in your eye.

ONE is tempted to addreſs the K— as Harry the Eighth does his wife, *mutatis mutandis:*

" Go thy ways, George!
" Whoe'er he be that ſhall aſſert he has
" A *bolder* king, let him in nought be
" truſted
" For ſaying falſe in that ———"

I HAVE a mind to write an ode in praiſe of him, and in rivalſhip of Cibber.—Mine ſhould be of the ballad ſtyle and familiarity, as expreſſing the ſentiments of a perſon returning from a diſlike to a thorough approbation of him, which ſeems, at preſent, the ſenſe of the nation.—But herein I am not in earneſt.—

MY pen has run on a whole page at random. It amuſes me to encourage it, and ſo I will try to get a frank.

I AM this moment arrived at Cheltenham, after an expenſive and fatiguing journey. I called yeſterday at Mickleton; ſaw the portico, and ſnapped up a bit of mutton at your brother's; drank a diſh of tea with Miſs S—; and, in oppoſition to the ſtrongeſt remonſtrances, perſiſted in

in an endeavour to reach Cheltenham after five o'clock. The conſequence was, that, about ten, I found myſelf travelling back again towards Stowe; and had undoubtedly wandered all night in the dark, had I not been fortunately met by a waggoner's ſervant, who brought me back to the worſt inn but one I ever lay at, being his maſter's.—Here I am: which is all I ſhall ſay in this letter.

Adieu!

W. S.

XXXIII. To Mr. JAGO, on the ſame.

The Leaſows, Saturday,
Dear Mr. Jago, July the 9th, 1743.

IT is not a contrived apology, or an excuſe, which I am going to offer for the diſappointments I have given you. I have actually been ſo much out of order ever ſince I wrote to you, nay, ever ſince I *formed a deſign* of a Sunday expedition to L——, that it never has been in my *power* to execute my intentions. My vertigo has not *yet* taken away my ſenſes: God knows

how ſoon it may do; but my nerves are in ſuch a condition, that I can ſcarce get a wink of even *diſordered* reſt for whole nights together. May you never know the miſery of ſuch involuntary vigils! I ride every day almoſt to fatigue; which only tends to make my want of ſleep more *ſenſible*, and not in the leaſt to remove it. I have *ſpirits* all day, good ones; though my head is dizzy, and I never enterprize any ſtudy of greater ſubtlety than a news-paper. I cannot ſay the journey to L—— would be at all *formidable* to me; for I ride about fifteen miles, as I compute it, every day before dinner. But the nights, from home, would be inſupportable to me. I have fatigued Mrs. Arnold's aſſiduity, to the injury of her health; by occaſioning her to ſit in my room a'nights, light my candle, put it out again, make me perſpiratory wheys, and ſlops; and am amuſed by the moſt ſilly animadverſions ſhe is capable of making. I never knew her uſefulneſs till now; but I *now* prefer her to *all* of *her ſtation*. If I get over this diſorder, concerning which I have bad apprehenſions, you may depend upon ſeeing me the firſt Sunday I dare venture forth. I hope *you* continue mending. The benefit of *riding* is only not univerſal, and would cure *me* too, could I but make one previous advance towards health. Have you

tried

tried cold bathing? Perhaps it may not ſuit your caſe. I wiſh I had not dropt it. I take my fluctuation of nerves to be cauſed, as that of the ſea is, by wind; which I am continually pumping up, and yet find it ſtill renewed. When I am juſt ſinking to ſleep, a ſudden twitch of my nerves calls me back again—to watchfulneſs, and vexation! I conſider myſelf as in the ſtate of the philoſopher, who held a bullet betwixt his finger and thumb, which, whenever he was about to nod, was ordered ſo as to fall into a large braſs pan, and wake him—that he might purſue his lucubrations.

I WILL mention one circumſtance regarding the weakneſs of my nerves;—and not my ſpirits, for I told you thoſe were tolerable:—the leaſt noiſe that is, even the falling of a fire-ſhovel upon the floor, if it happen unexpectedly, ſhocks my whole frame; and I actually believe that a gun fired, behind my back, unawares, amidſt the ſtillneſs of the night, would go near to kill me with its noiſe.

I AM juſt going to bed; and dare not be any more attentive, as I hope to cloſe my eyes for a minute. So fare you well!

IT

It is now six o'clock in the morning, and I have had about five hours middling sleep; which encourages me greatly: so I will *hope* to be able to see you next Sunday sevennight.

What think you of the battle? Are not you so much in love with our King, that you could find in your heart to serve him in any profitable post he might assign you?

Capt. L——— is wounded in the thigh.

When I ride in my chair round my neighbourhood, I am as much stared and wondered at, as a giant would be that should walk through Pall-mall. My vehicle is at *least as* uncommon hereabouts as a blazing comet. My chief pleasure lies in finding out a thousand roads, and delightful little haunts near home, which I never dreamt of: egregious solitudes, and most incomparable bye-lanes! where I can as effectually lose myself within a mile of home, as if I were benighted in the desarts of Arabia. Adieu!

XXXIV. To Mr. GRAVES, written in Hay-Harveſt.

Dear Mr. Graves, July 3, 1743.

I DID not part from you without a *great deal* of melancholy. To think of the *ſhort* duration of thoſe interviews which are the objects of one's *continual* wiſhes, has been a reflection that has plagued me of old! I am ſure I returned home with it then, more aggravated as I foreſaw myſelf returning to the ſame ſeries of melancholy hours from which you had a while relieved me, and which I had *particularly* ſuffered under all this laſt ſpring! I wiſh to God, you might happen to be ſettled not far from me: a day's-journey diſtance, however; I mean, an *eaſy* one. But the odds are infinitely againſt me. I muſt only *rely* for my happineſs on the hopes of a never-ceaſing correſpondence!

SOON after you were gone, I received my packet. The hiſtory of Worceſterſhire is mere ſtuff. T—— I am ſo fond of, that, I believe, I ſhall have his part of the collection bound over again, neatly and ſeparately. But ſure Hammond has no right to the leaſt *inventive* merit,

as the preface-writer would insinuate. I do not think there is a single thought, of any eminence, that is not literally translated. I am astonished he could content himself with being so little an original.

Mr. Lyttelton and his lady are at Hagley. A malignant caterpillar has demolished the beauty of all our *large* oaks. Mine are secured by their littleness. But, I guess, the park suffers; a large wood near me being a mere winter-piece for nakedness.

At present, I give myself up to riding and thoughtlessness; being resolved to make trial of *their* efficacy towards a tolerable degree of health and spirits. I wish I had you for my director. I should proceed with great confidence of success; though I am brought very low by two or three fits of a fever since I saw you. Had I written to you in the midst of my dispirited condition, as I was going, you would have had a more tender and unaffected letter than I *can* write at another time: what I think, perhaps, at all times; but what sickness can alone elicit from a temper fearful of whining.

SURELY the "nunc formoſiſſimus annus" is to be limited to hay-harveſt. I could give my reaſons: but you will imagine them to be the activity of country people in a pleaſing employment; the full verdure of the ſummer; the prime of pinks, woodbines, jaſmines, &c. I am old; very old; for few things give me ſo much mechanical pleaſure as lolling on a bank in the very heat of the ſun,

"When the old come forth to play
"On a ſun-ſhine holiday—"

And yet it is as much as I can do to keep Mrs. Arnold from going to neighbouring houſes in her ſmock, in deſpite of decency and my known diſapprobation.

I FIND myſelf more of a patriot than I ever thought I was. Upon reading the account of the battle, I found a very ſenſible pleaſure, or, as the Methodiſts term it, perceived my heart *enlarged*, &c. The map you ſent me is a pretty kind of *toy*, but does not enough particularize the ſcenes of the war, &c. which was the end I had in view when I ſent for it.

"O DURA

"O DURA meſſorum ilia!" About half the appetite, digeſtion, ſtrength, ſpirits, &c. of a mower, would make me the happieſt of mortals! I would be underſtood literally, and preciſely.

Adieu!

W. S.

XXXV. To the ſame, after the Diſappointment of a Viſit.

Dear Sir, 1743.

I AM tempted to begin my letter as Memmius does his harangue: "Multa me dehortan-"tur à vobis, ni ſtudium virtutis veſtræ omnia "exſuperet."—You contrive interviews of about a minute's duration; and you make appointments in order to diſappoint one; and yet, at the ſame time that your proceedings are thus vexatious, force one to bear teſtimony to the ineſtimable value of your friendſhip! I do inſiſt upon it, that you ought to compound for the diſappointment you have cauſed me, by a little letter every poſt you ſtay in town. I ſhall now ſcarce ſee you

till next ſummer, or ſpring at ſooneſt; and then I may probably take occaſion to viſit you, under pretence of ſeeing Derbyſhire. Truth is, your prints have given me *ſome* curioſity to ſee the original places. I am grateful for your intentions with regard to giving me part of them, and impertinent in deſiring you to convey them to me as ſoon as you can well ſpare them. Let me know if they are ſold ſeparately at the print ſhops. I think to recommend them to my new acquaintance, Mr. Lyttelton Brown. I like the humour of the ballad you mention, but am more obliged for your partial opinion of me. The notes that fall upon the word "Cannon, "Cannon," are admirably expreſſive of the ſound, I dare ſay: I mean, jointly with its echo; and ſo, I ſuppoſe, you will think, if you ever attended to the Tower-guns. I find I cannot afford to go to Bath previouſly to my London-journey; though I look upon it as a proper method to make my reſidence in town more agreeable. I ſhall, probably, be there about the firſt of December; or before, if I can accelerate my friend Whiſtler's journey. The pen I write with is the moſt diſagreeable of pens! But I have little elſe to ſay; only this,—that our good friend, Jack Dolman, is dead at Aldridge; his father's benefice.

I BEG,

I BEG, if you have leiſure, you would incloſe me in a frank the following ſongs, with the notes: "Stella and Flavia," "Gentle Jeſſy," "Sylvia, wilt thou waſte thy prime?" and any other that is new. I ſhould be glad of that number of the Britiſh Orpheus which has my ſong in it, if it does not coſt above ſix-pence. Make my compliments to your brother and ſiſter; and believe me, in the common forms, but in no common degree,

Dear Mr. Graves's

Moſt affectionate friend and ſervant,

The Leaſows,
Nov. 9th, 1743.

W. SHENSTONE.

Do write out the whole ballad of "The Baron "ſtood behind a tree."

XXXVI. To the ſame, on the Receipt of a Preſent of Prints.

Dear Sir, The Leaſows, Dec. 23, 1743.

YOU may reaſonably have expected a letter before now, either as an acknowledgment for your genteel preſent, or, at leaſt, by way of information that I had received it. The prints have given me a pleaſure, which, however conſiderable, would ſoon have languiſhed, if I had bought them at a ſhop; but which is now built upon the eſteem I have for the giver, and cannot have a more durable foundation.—As for the reſt, I am moſt pleaſed with the view of Matlock, and ſhall have no peace of mind till I have ſeen the original. I have been gilding the frames, and wiſhing all the while for your company.

I WILL alter the ballad according to your advice; dividing it into three parts, and adding a ſtanza or two to the ſhorteſt, ſome time or other. I have had no opportunity of trying the tunes. "Arno's vale" has pretty words, and recommends itſelf to one's imagination by the probability that it was written on a real occaſion. The

ſimilitude of rhimes in the cloſe inexcuſable. For all that has been the ſubject of my letter hitherto, as the country people ſay, I can but thank you, and I do very ſincerely; though as to the ſongs I will re-pay you.

I HAVE your poem by me, which I have read often with the greateſt pleaſure. I have many obſervations to make; and only defer the communication till I know whether you have a copy at Tiſſington to turn to. I think, the moſt *polite* and *ſuitable* title to it would run thus: "The "Villa, a Poem; containing a Sketch of the "preſent Taſte in Rural Embelliſhments, written "in 1740." Your preface has a pretty thought towards the cloſe; otherwiſe is on no account to be admitted. Pardon my freedom; but, I think, there is no manner of occaſion for a preface; and thoſe ſtrokes, which I *know* to be real modeſty in *you*, the world will undoubtedly impute to affectation.—If you give me encouragement, I will be very minute in my criticiſms, allowing you to reject ten to one that you admit of.

WHISTLER is gone to Briſtol, and has bilked me.—I ſaid, he is gone; but, I believe, he is only upon going.—I linger at home, in hopes of gleaning up a little health; and through a dread of

of being ill in a place where I can be leſs attended on.—I can continually *find out* ſomething in my preceding diet that, I *think*, diſorders me; ſo that I am conſtantly in hopes of growing well: —but, perhaps, I never ſhall:

" Optima quæque dies miſeris mortalibus ævi
" *Prima* fugit, ſubeunt morbi —— "

WHEN I was a ſchool-boy, I never knew there *was any ſuch thing* as perſpiration; and now, half my time is taken up in conſidering the immediate connexion betwixt that and health, and endeavouring to promote it.

MR. Lyttelton has built a kind of alcove in his park, inſcribed, " SEDES CONTEMPLATIO-" NIS," near his hermitage. Under the aforeſaid inſcription is " OMNIA VANITAS: "—the ſides ornamented with ſheeps-bones, jaws, ſculls, &c. feſtoon-wiſe. In a nitch over it, an owl.

As to ſchemes, I have none with regard to the world, women, or books. And I hate, and have deferred writing to you (for ſome days) for that reaſon. I am ſick of exhibiting ſo much fameneſs:—I am conſtantly poring over ſome Claſſic, which I conſider as one of Idleneſs's bet-

ter

ter ſhapes. But I am impatient to be doing ſomething that may tend to better my ſituation in ſome reſpect or other. It is *encouragement* can alone inſpire one.

——— "Multa & præclare minantem
"Vivere nec *recte*, nec *ſuaviter* ———"

expreſſes the whole of me. Thus my epiſtles perſevere in the plaintive ſtyle; and I queſtion whether the ſight of them does not, ere now, give you the vapours. I have an old aunt that viſits me ſometimes, whoſe converſation is the perfect counterpart of them. She ſhall fetch a long-winded ſigh with Dr. Young for a wager; though I ſee *his* Suſpiria are not yet finiſhed. He has *relapſed* into "Night the Fifth." I take his caſe to be wind in a great meaſure, and would adviſe him to take rhubarb in powder, with a little nutmeg grated amongſt it, as I do.—

Dear Mr. G—! write down to me; and believe me to be, invariably,

Your moſt ſincere

and obliged friend, &c.

W. Shenstone.

XXXVII. To

XXXVII. To the ſame, with Obſervations on Hypocriſy, &c.

Dear Sir, 1743.

YOU muſt know, my laſt letter to you was written before I received yours from Tiſſington; and I ſhould take ſhame upon myſelf for not anſwering it, were I not furniſhed with this excuſe—that I waited for a frank for you. —There are but few things I have to ſay to you, and ſuch as are not worth tranſcribing; yet, as our diſtance from one another requires it, I will ſcrawl them over as negligently as I can, to let you ſee I lay no ſtreſs upon them. A good excuſe for lazineſs! you will ſay: and lazy enough I am, God knows! I believe, any one who knows me thoroughly will think, that there never was ſo great an inconſiſtence as there is betwixt my words (in my poem) and my actions.—This is what the world calls hypocriſy, and is determined to look upon with *peculiar* averſion. But, I think, the hypocrite is a *half*-good character. A man certainly, conſidering the force of precedent, deſerves ſome praiſe who keeps up appearances; and is, no doubt, as much to be commended

commended for talking better than he acts, as he is to be blamed for acting worse than he talks. So much for casuistry. I would seem, you must know, to have some meritorious views in talking *virtuously*; but who does not know that every one who writes poetry looks directly with his face towards praise, and whatever else his eye takes in is viewed obliquely? Praise, as I said to foible-confessing W—, is the desired, the noted, and the adequate reward of poetry; in which sort he that rewards me, Heaven reward him, as Sir John Falstaff says. There is something very vain in repeating my own sayings; but I could not conscientiously use a joke to you which I had used in another letter, without owning it. —In short, it is necessary to have some *earthly* aim in view; the next world, whether it be in reality near or far off, is always *seen* at a distance. All that the generality of young people can do is, to act *consistently with* their expectations there. Now, though fame, &c. be obviously enough in the eye of reason dissatisfactory; yet it is proper enough to suffer one's self to be deluded with the hopes of it, that is, it is proper to cherish some worldly hopes, that one may avoid impatience, spleen, and one sort of *despair:* I mean that of having no *hopes* here, because one sees nothing here that deserves them.

If

If I were in your caſe, I would make all the efforts I was able towards being a Biſhop. That ſhould be my earthly aim: not but I would act with ſo much indifference as to bear all diſappointment unconcernedly—as, I dare ſay, you will.—There is but one paſſion that I put upon an equally ſprightly footing with ambition, and that is love; which, as it *regularly tends* to matrimony, requires certain favours from fortune and circumſtance to render it proper to indulge in.—By this time you think me crazed—as it often happens to me to doubt, *ſeriouſly*, whether I am not: but if it be the "mentis "gratiſſimus error," I do not mind. You are very obliging to endeavour to continue my madneſs and vanity.—I ſhould be as glad to ſee Mr. Graves, your brother, as any one I know: I live in a manner wherein he would find many things to exerciſe his good nature.

PAMELA would have made one good volume: I wonder the author, who has ſome *nice* natural ſtrokes, ſhould not have ſenſe enough to ſee that.—I beg you will collect all the hints, &c. of your own, or others, that you think may tend to the improvement of my poem againſt winter; that you would mention any flat lines, &c. Write

me

me word some time ere you come over; but write to me immediately. I am

Yours faithfully,

W. SHENSTONE.

Once more adieu!

XXXVIII. To a Friend, with a Parody.

The Leasows,
Dear Sir, March 1, 1743-4.

YOU are upon very *good* terms with me, and *have* been all along. I guessed the causes of your silence, and have been sincerely sorry for them; not however that I did not believe you were more happy than any one in the world who is neither a lover nor a poet, though not able to turn himself for money-bags.—I am really going to London; and am about the purchase of an elegant pair of pistols from Birmingham. I indulge myself in this expence, because they shall serve in two capacities; one while to garnish my chair, another while my horse. And some time next week you will probably see your old friend on horse-back, armed

at

at all points, and as very a knight to all *appearance* as any body.

——"*Well! they say the Owl was a Quaker's*
"*Daughter — one knows what one* IS, *but one does*
"*not know what one* SHALL *be.*"

Ophelia in Hamlet.

But I digreſs. If I juſt call to ſee you, God forbid that I ſhould be burthenſome to you. I will ſend my horſes to H—, and lodge there, or ſomewhere. But I am perfectly impatient to unboſom my ſoul to you, and to ſee Mrs. Jago, whom I ſhould have mentioned firſt. Wedneſday or Tueſday indeed ſeems the moſt likely day.—Though I am not ſure; nor do you confine yourſelf.

Poor Mariett! *I* too am emaciated; but I hope, by means of ſome warm weather, to acquire *plus d'embonpoint*. I deſign to call upon him, and keep him in countenance.

My ballad, in the midſt of your hurry, muſt appear as ridiculous as Cinna the poet does, when he ſwears nothing but death ſhall reſtrain him from addreſſing Brutus and Caſſius (and that the night before the battle) with two doggrel verſes—

verſes—and thoſe the worſt I have ever read; and that makes the ſimile the more juſt. It is now a good deal metamorphoſed. Your parody is prodigiouſly droll: the firſt line delights me! I think I could furniſh Mrs. K— with as good mottoes, and as cheap, though I ſay it, as any body; but, alas!— Did I ſend you the following parody or no, before? I believe not. *Le voila!*

" When firſt, Philander, firſt I came
" Where Avon rolls his winding ſtream,
" The nymphs—how briſk! the ſwains—how
" gay!
" To ſee *Aſteria*, Queen of May!——
" The parſons round, her praiſes ſung!
" The ſteeples, with her praiſes rung!—
" I thought—no ſight, that e'er was ſeen,
" Could match the ſight of Barel's-green!——

" But *now*, ſince old *Eugenio* dy'd—
" The chief of poets, and the pride—
" Now, meaner bards in vain aſpire
" To raiſe their voice, to tune their lyre!
" Their lovely ſeaſon, now, is o'er!
" Thy notes, Florelio, pleaſe no more!—
" No more Aſteria's ſmiles are ſeen!——
" Adieu!—the ſweets of Barel's-green!——"

It is a kind of extempore, ſo excuſe it.—You have ſeen the ſong of Arno's Vale.

I am taking part of my farm upon my hands, to ſee if I can ſucceed as a farmer;—but I am afraid I am under the ſentence, "And, behold, "whatſoever he taketh in hand, it ſhall *not* "proſper."

My good friend, I ſincerely confide, that, however we may be ſeparated, no time ſhall extenuate our mutual friendſhip. I am

Your zealous, unſerviceable friend,

W. Shenstone.

XXXIX. To Mr. Graves, on Social Happineſs.

Dear Mr. Graves, About 1745.

THERE is not a ſyllable you tell me concerning yourſelf in your laſt letter, but what applied to *me* is moſt literally true. I am ſenſible of the daily progreſs I make towards inſignificancy, and it will not be many years before

before you see me arrived at the *ne plus ultra*. I believe it is absolutely impossible for me to acquire a considerable degree of knowledge, though I can understand things well enough at the time I read them. I remember a preacher at St. Mary's (I think it was Mr. E—) made a notable distinction betwixt *apprehension* and *comprehension*. If there be a real difference, probably it may find a place in the explication of my genius. I envy you a good *general* insight into the writings of the learned. I must aim at nothing higher than a well-concealed ignorance. —I was thinking, upon reading your letter, *when* it was that you and Mr. Whistler and I went out of the road of happiness. It certainly was where we first deviated from the turnpike road of life. Wives, children, alliances, visits, &c. are necessary objects of our social passions; and whether or no we can, through particular circumstances, be happy *with*, I think it plain enough that it is not possible to be happy *without* them. All attachments to inanimate beauties, to curiosities, and ornaments, satiate us presently.—The fanciful tribe has the disadvantage to be naturally prone to err in the choice of *lasting* pleasures: and when our passions have habitually wandered, it is too difficult to reduce them into their proper chan-

nels. When this is the case, nothing but the change or variety of amusements stands any chance to make us easy, and it is not long ere the whole species is exhausted.—I agree with you entirely in the necessity of a *sociable* life in order to be happy: I do not think it much a paradox, that any company is better than *none*. I think it obvious enough as to the present hour, and as to any future influence, solitude has exceeding savage effects on our dispositions.—I have wrote out my elegy: I lay no manner of stress but upon the piety of it.—Would it not be a good kind of motto, applied to a person you know, that might be taken from what is said of *Ophelia* in *Hamlet*,

"I tell thee, faithless priest!
"A ministring angel shall Ophelia be
"When thou art howling."

I HAVE amused myself often with this species of writing since you saw me; partly to divert my present *impatience*, and partly as it will be a picture of most that passes in my mind; a portrait which *friends* may value.—I should be glad of your profile: if you have objections, I drop my request.—I should be heartily glad if you would come and live with me, for any space of time that you could find convenient.

nient. But I will depend on your coming over with Mr. Whiſtler in the ſpring. I may poſſibly take a jaunt towards you ere long: the road would furniſh me out ſome viſits; and, by the time I reached you, perhaps, afford me a kind of climax of happineſs. If I do not, I ſhall perhaps be a little time at Bath. I do not ſpeak of this laſt as a ſcheme from which I entertain great expectations of pleaſure. It is long ſince I have conſidered myſelf as *undone*. The *world* will not perhaps conſider me in that light entirely, till I have married my maid. Adieu!

XL. To the ſame, with Obſervations on the Rebellion, and its probable Conſequences.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 22, 1745.

MY life, for aught I ſee, will paſs away juſt as it *has* done, without introducing ſufficient improvement into my circumſtances to give a chearful caſt to my correſpondence. In *one* reſpect, in regard to my inviolable friendſhip for *you*, I hope you will hear with ſome ſatisfaction, that I continue ſtill the ſame. And

this kind of *identity*, I think, I could promiſe you, though every circumſtance in my fortune, every particle of my body, were changed; and others, ever ſo heterogeneous, ſubſtituted in their place. After this, it would be no compliment to ſay, that the *pretended* heir to theſe kingdoms could not alter it, were he to ſubvert the Britiſh conſtitution; which muſt, out of all doubt, be the conſequence of his ſucceſs. The rebellion, you may gueſs, is the ſubject of all converſation. Every individual nailer here takes in a news-paper (a more *pregnant* one by far than any of the London ones), and talks as familiarly of *kings* and *princes* as ever Maſter Shallow did of John of Gaunt. Indeed it is no bad thing that they do ſo; for I cannot conceive that the people want ſo much to be convinced by *ſermons*, of the abſurdities of *popery*, as they do by *news-papers*, that *it* may *poſſibly* prevail. The reaſons and arguments too in favour of the preſent Government are ſo *ſtrong* and *obvious*, that even I, and every country 'ſquire, and every country clerk, and Sam Shaw the taylor, ſeem to be as much maſters of them as the Biſhops themſelves. I muſt not ſay we could expreſs them ſo politely.—I like Secker's the beſt of any ſermon on this occaſion. He gives his audience a view of ſuch

evil

evil consequences from a *change*, as no man of sense can possibly doubt of, when fairly stated: and, I own, I cannot see one single *good* it could produce, in compensation for its inevitable and abundant *mischiefs*.—I have read Dr. Sherlock's sermon on this occasion: and I have read Mr. Warburton's; and, at your request, I will read his Legation.

I HAVE often thoughts of a jaunt as far as your country this winter. Some kind of pilgrimage I must make, to avoid a lethargy.—Public places I want to visit a little; to peep at and renew my ideas of the *world's* vanity; but either Bath or London would steep me so far in poverty, that I should not probably emerge before the middle of next summer. I have spent this last summer agreeably enough with some of my young relations, Mr. Dolman's children.—They have an excellent taste for their years.—I have been upon several jaunts with the son to Litchfield, Worcester, Mr. Fletcher's, &c. amusing him, what I could, under the loss of his father. Miss W—F— asked very earnestly after you. Two of the sisters have been with me at the Leasows, and upon several parties of pleasure in my chair.—Broom is disposed of—I do not under-

ſtand upon what inducement.—After all, I am miſerable;—conſcious to myſelf that I am too little ſelfiſh: that I ought now or never to aim at ſome addition to my fortune; and that I make large advances towards the common cataſtrophe of *better* poets, poverty.—I never can attend enough to ſome twelve-penny matter, on which a great deal depends.—My amour, ſo far as I indulge it, gives me ſome pleaſure, and no pain in the world.—I have read Spenſer once again, and I have added full as much more to my *School-miſtreſs*, in regard to *number of lines*; *ſomething* in point of *matter* (or *manner* rather) *which* does not diſpleaſe me. I would be glad if Mr. —— were, upon your requeſt, to give his opinion of particulars, for two reaſons; as you ſay he has ſome taſte for this kind of writing, and as he is my enemy, and would, therefore, find out its deficiencies.

I HAVE a reaſon of a moſt whimſical kind, why I would wiſh you to preſerve this letter. Pray write ſoon, and believe me moſt affectionately

Your friend and humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLI. To

XLI. To the same, with Remarks on the Execution and Behaviour of the Lords Kilmarnock and Balmerino.

Dear Mr. Graves, 1746, ineunte anno.

I BELIEVE it is impossible for me to disagree with you on any other score, than the scanty pittances you allot me of your company; and, if I have discloſed any symptoms of resentment on that account, you will, perhaps, overlook them, out of regard to the motive from which they proceeded.—I thank you for your perusal of that trivial poem. If I were going to print it, I should give way to your remarks *implicitly*, and would not *dare* to do otherwise. But so long as I keep it in manuscript, you will pardon my silly prejudices, if I chuse to read and shew it with the addition of most of my new stanzas. I own, I have a fondness for several, imagining them to be *more* in Spenser's way, yet more independent on the antique phrase, than any part of the poem; and, on that account, I cannot yet prevail on myself to banish *them* entirely; but were I to print, I should (with *some* reluctance) give way to your sentiments (which I know are just), namely,

that

that they render the work too diffuse and flimzy, and seem rather excrescences than essential parts of it.

But of these things I say no more now. I purpose staying a month with Mr. Whistler in December, if it suits him; and then I hope I shall have a great deal of your company. Let me hear something in your next of your *domestic affairs*. I beg you would not make any grand decision, without giving me some previous information. I esteem this as due to the friendship I have so long professed for you, and from the friendship you have so long professed for me.

I look upon the death of the two Lords as equally decent upon their respective principles. Lord Kilmarnock, I suppose, joined the rebels through a view of bettering his circumstances, conscious to himself that he was guilty of a crime the moment he did so. This is agreeable to his speech before the Lords, and to that melancholy which he discovered upon the scaffold. Death, aggravated by guilt, would sit heavier upon him than upon the other, even supposing him to have had the same resolution. Balmerino's life was quite *unie*, and his death

equal

equal to the character he aimed at. We are to observe, that he meant to suffer as a Friend to the Stewarts, a Soldier, and a Scotsman. The first he manifested when he came out of the Tower, by his reply of "God save King J—s;" the second, by his dress, and numberless ostentations of intrepidity; the last, by his plaid night-cap. Did you hear the story of his sending a message to Lord Kilmarnock? "That "he had been practising how to lye upon the "block; and had found out, the easiest way of "receiving the blow was, to bite his tongue "hard: or even if he bit it off, it was no "matter, they should have no further use for it." His behaviour seems to have wanted coolness, or else to equal that of Adrian, Cato, Sir T. More, &c. or any of those heroes who had spirit enough to make an ostentation of their unconcern. I had, from the printed accounts of their behaviour, an idea of their persons, exactly conformable to the description I read afterwards in your paper;—but enough—you send me sterling matters of fact, and I return you tinsel observations.—I thank you for accenting Crŏmĕrtie and Balmĕrĭno; I learnt Cullŏden from you *before*.

I HAVE

I HAVE had little company ſince I ſaw you.—One day indeed I was ſurprized by a viſit from Mr. Thomſon, Author of the Seaſons.—Mr. Lyttelton introduced him.—I have not room to tell you all that paſſed.—They praiſed my place extravagantly;—propoſed alterations, &c. Thomſon was very facetious, and very complaiſant; invited me to his houſe at Richmond. There were many things ſaid worth *telling*, but not *writing* to you.—This has been a ſummer that I have ſpent more *ſocially* than any one theſe three years. I expect a good deal more company this week, the next, and the week after.—Lady Luxborough talks of coming, and I believe *will*.—The viſit would bring my little walks into repute.—When will the time come, that I ſhall enjoy your company here a month uninterrupted? Dear Sir,

Yours moſt faithfully,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLII. To

XLII. To the same, with a new Theory of Political Principles.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I HAVE lately received a letter from Mr. Whistler, which conveys your compliments to me, and, by so doing, prompts me to acknowledge the receipt of your last kind letter. I observe you adhere strictly to the apostolical precept of being "swift to *hear*, slow "to *speak*;" the latter part of which I would fain conclude you understand too literally.

YOUR neighbour, I see, is not a little embarrassed with his mills at Whitchurch. I have long had an eye upon his advertisement in the London Evening Post, and been not a little scandalized thereat. What has the name of a poet to do with the publication of lands and tenements? or the idea of harmony with the noise of a water-mill? yet has he extracted music from the subject, and mirth from his misfortunes; having sent me a ballad upon the miller, written with much ease and some drollery.

As

As to the light in which you place your present fortunes, I can only say, that you have not that situation I could wish you for your *own sake*: for so far as *I* am concerned in your elevation, I can assure you very faithfully, that no circumstances in the world could more endear you to my affection, or recommend you to my respect, than the present. My *affection*, you will easily observe, from the very *nature* of affection in general, would stand no chance to be increased by your promotion; and as for respect, if I knew the degree you desired, I would acquit myself of it to your satisfaction *now*; and were you settled at *Lambeth*, I should expect that you would require no *more* from me upon that account; at least in private: so that, so far as either *deference* or *friendship* is concerned, you are an Archbishop to *me* to all intents and purposes.—As to figure in the world, it depends much, I know, upon advancement; and yet even here you will be ever *sure* of that kind of weight which ingenuity gives; discernible to the *smaller* indeed, but undoubtedly the more *valuable* part of the world;—but this is improper, as it is *philosophy*, and as it is *advice*; neither of which is it suitable for me to suggest to you—"Alcinoo Poma, &c." As to

the

the long ſeries of *my* lamentations, I will not now enter upon the reaſonableneſs of them. It is a ſubject, to tell you the truth, on which you cannot reply without ſome danger of hurting me.—As for politics (you will blame this letter for dwelling ſo much upon the ſubject of yours); but as for politics, I think *poets* are *tories* by nature, ſuppoſing them to be by nature poets.—The love of an individual perſon or family, that has worn a crown for many ſucceſſions, is an inclination greatly adapted to the fanciful tribe. On the other hand, mathematicians, abſtract-reaſoners, of no manner of attachment to perſons, at leaſt to the *viſible* part of them, but prodigiouſly devoted to the ideas of virtue, liberty, and ſo forth, are generally *whigs*. It happens agreeably enough to this maxim, that the whigs are friends to that wiſe plodding, un-poetical people the Dutch.—The tories, on the other hand, are taken mightily with that ſhewy, oſtentatious nation the French. Fox-hunters, that reſide amongſt the beauties of nature, and bid defiance to art, in ſhort, that have intellects of a poetical *turn*, are frequently tories; citizens, merchants, &c. that ſcarce ſee what nature is, and conſequently have no pretenſions to a poetical taſte, are, I think, generally argumentative and whiggiſh;—

but

but perhaps I carry this too far.—Something there is in it however, you will ſee: not that I would apply what I here ſay to particular revolutions, &c. I would only advance ſomething general and ſpeculative. Nor would I approve or condemn by this any one ſet of people now exiſting. Nor would I have you pretend to fiſh out my party from any thing I have ſaid; for I am of none.—The letter I ſent you laſt was *occaſional*, and when I ſee you I will tell you the occaſion. I abſolutely agree with you in every tittle of your political obſervations.—I am glad I do; for I know the poiſonous nature of party: and though we are *neither* violent, yet I ſhould fear it. My ſchemes are *doubtful* at preſent, but my face is ſet towards Bath.—I am confident of the ſervice thoſe waters would do me.—I hope you will exhilarate me with a letter ſoon.—I would fain have furniſhed out a letter to amuſe you after ſo long a ſilence, but I find myſelf unable; even *as* unable as I am to expreſs the regard with which I am

Yours,

The Leaſows,
April 6, 1746.

W. SHENSTONE.

XLIII. To

XLIII. Continuation of the ſame.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. Graves, May 11, 1746.

THOUGH I feel an irreſiſtible propenſity to write to you this very poſt, yet I cannot ſay that I am able to advance any thing tending either to your own or my ſatisfaction.—What is worſt of all is, I cannot fix the time of ſeeing you with ſo much preciſion as I would always endeavour where my pleaſure is ſo much concerned—I will tell you the whole affair.—I have for a long ſeaſon purpoſed to drink the Bath waters this ſpring; and *did* think of ſetting out in a week's time, when I received your letter, purpoſing to ſtay there a month; and from thence take a circuit which ſhould indulge me in a ſight of you, Mr. Whiſtler, and ſome few others in my way home. The latter part of this ſcheme (though far the more agreeable to me) was rather doubtful and precarious; depending (as you expreſs it) on the ſtate of my finances after a month's continuance at Bath; which I conſidered, and *do* conſider, as a very probable means of bettering my conſtitution.—Now I covet to ſee you ſo much, that I would

bring nothing but health in competition.—What I wish is, that you could, with convenience, either *hasten* or *delay* your journey, that you might find me before mine, or after my return, though I should infinitely, and for many reasons, prefer the former. I long to talk with you particularly now. I have much to say in regard to our friend's amour, to which you alluded in your last. I request it as a favour of you, that you would conjure him, by the friendship I have ever born him, and by any esteem which he has ever professed for me, that he would do nothing very *material* in the affair till I have talked it over, and given him my faithful sentiments, "quod censet amiculus."

I AM not willing the balance should turn entirely on the whig side: I would give it a greater equilibrium, if the following suggestion might effect it. Tories, I said, have great, and sometimes partial affections for the *person* of a king.—We will suppose that kings are alternately good and bad: their loyalty to the good one is commendable; their partiality to the bad one not to be vindicated. Whigs have *no* passion, *no* gratitude, towards the good prince: there they are wrong. They are severe upon the bad one, in which they are justifiable. I

wiſh I had not begun theſe wholeſale diſtinctions, this miſerable ſpecimen of my politics. I proteſt againſt all epiſtolary diſputes. I am now embarraſſed in one, on much ſuch another ſcore, which fills up all my letter; for I love the laſt word, like a ſcold or a child.—I thank you for your little anecdotes from time to time: you may depend upon it, that I have never heard any thing *before*; for I never *do* hear any thing.—I am one very thankful letter in debt to your neighbour Whiſtler. I have at preſent nothing but the *propenſity* of a good correſpondent; but I will write ſoon. In the mean time, if you ſee him, aſk him if he goes to Bath or Briſtol this ſeaſon.—I beg you would write to me directly *when* you can come, and how I may regulate my motions ſo as to be beſt aſſured of ſeeing you.—Pray do not neglect a poſt. I am

Yours moſt entirely,

W. S.

XLIV. To the ſame, on the Mixture of Pleaſure and Pain.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. Graves, June the laſt, 1747.

IT is now, I believe, near half a year ſince I had the favour of a letter from you. When I wrote laſt, I diſcovered a more than ordinary ſolicitude for *one* immediate anſwer. It puzzles me to account for your unuſual ſilence, otherwiſe than upon ſuppoſition of ſome offence you have taken: and it puzzles me as much to gueſs by what behaviour of mine I have been ſo unhappy as to give you that offence.

I AM vain enough to imagine that the little merit I have, deſerves ſomewhat more regard than I have met with from the world. Be that as it will, the diſappointment I muſt undergo, by any *appearance* of neglect from the friends I value, would more effectually diſpirit me than any other whatſoever.

I HAVE publiſhed my deſign of viſiting you, and Mr. Whiſtler in Oxfordſhire, to all the world. A thouſand incidents have hitherto in-

terfered with it, which I will not now recount. But when I look back upon the regular ſucceſſion of them, it looks as if Deſtiny had ſome hand in detaining me. The moſt *vigorous* of my *hopes* dwell upon ſeeing you next winter, though I am not a little indulgent to *thoſe* that tell me I may ſee you long before.

I HAVE brought my place here to greater perfection than it has ever yet appeared in; and, with the *mob*, it is in ſome vogue. Nevertheleſs, I do not know that I ever reliſhed it leſs in my life than I have done this ſummer. Bad health, bad ſpirits, no company to my mind, and no correſpondences, are enough to blaſt the ſweeteſt ſhades, and to poiſon the pureſt fountains. Some of theſe misfortunes I can impute to my own miſconduct, and it embitters them. The two laſt I can leſs account for, having at all times done all I was able to recommend myſelf to my *friends*, behaving at the ſame time with courteſy to the reſt of the world. The fact is not true; otherwiſe I might reſolve it into this, that I alone am idle, and all the world is *buſy*.

I FANCY you will imagine I lay too much ſtreſs upon Mr. Thomſon's viſit, when I men-

pion the following inſcription upon a ſeat in Virgil's grove.

" CELEB^MO. POETÆ
" JACOBO THOMSON, S.
" PROPE FONTES ILLI NON FASTIDITOS
" G. S.
" SEDEM HANC ORNAVIT.

" Quæ tibi quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
" Nam neque me tantum *venientis* * *ſibilus* Auſtri,
" Nec percuſſa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec
" quæ
" Saxoſas inter decurrunt flumina valles."
VIRG.

I want your opinion of it, and whether it were not better thus,

—— THOMSON,
" QVI CVM QVICQVID VBIQVE RVRIS EST
" AVT AMOENVM AVT VARIVM
" MIRE DEPINXERAT,
" HOS ETIAM FONTES NON FASTIDIVIT."

But you will diſcover at firſt glance an impropriety in both.—Now I am upon inſcriptions, I ſend you one from a coin dug up very near me a few weeks ago.

* The verſe whiſpers here.

Round

Round the head,

"IMP ·.·.·.·.·.· V AVG GER DAC M"

On the reverſe,

"S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI COS VI"

Within which is an human figure ſitting, with one hand reclined upon a wand; the other, as I take it, holding forth an olive.—I have given my opinion, it is one of Trajan's; and my virtuoſo character will reſt upon the truth of it. It is a ſilver coin, but very obſcure. There appears a large maſs of ruins, rough ſtone, very ſtrongly cemented, where they found it.—If you were here, it might amuſe you.

HEAVINESS may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.—I have ſo ſettled a notion of the proportionate mixture of pleaſure and pain in this life, that I expect one to ſucceed the other as naturally as day and night. I own, this is owing to the ſoul as much as to outward incidents. Sorrow prepares it for mirth, and *vice verſa*.—The durations of both differ.—Laſt ſummer I ſpent agreeably; this quite otherwiſe.—To-day I have been quite melancholy; I expect happineſs to-morrow from

either an aptitude of mind, or some incident sufficient to overcome its inaptitude.—Perhaps that incident may be a letter from you; I wish it may, and am most truly

Yours,

W. S.

I had a coin of Vespasian given me to-day, and I begin a collection: if you have any duplicates, you will please to oblige me.—I want to correct my elegies, by your assistance.—I will begin no more.

XLV. To the same, with Thoughts on Advice.

The Leasows,
Dear Mr. Graves, Sept. 21, 1747.

I AM under some apprehension that you dread the sight of a letter from me, as it seems to lay claim to the compliment of an answer. I will therefore write you one that shall wave its privilege, at least till such time as your leisure encourages, or your present dissipation does not forbid you to send one.—I dare now no longer

longer expatiate upon the affair you have in hand; it is enough for me, if you will excuſe the freedom I *have* taken. I have often known *delay* produce good effects in ſome caſes which even ſagacity itſelf could not ſurmount; and, if I thought I did not go too far, would preſume to recommend it now. You know I have very little of the temper of an alderman. I almoſt hate the *idea* of wealthineſs as much as the *word*. It ſeems to me to carry a notion of fulneſs, ſtagnation, and inſignificancy. It is this diſpoſition of mine that can *alone* give any weight to the advice I ſend you, as it proves me not to give it through any partiality to fortune. As to what remains, you are, I hope, aſſured of the value I muſt ever have for you in *any* circumſtances, and the regard I ſhall always ſhew for any that belongs to you. I cannot like you *leſs* or *more*.—I now drop into other matters. Bergen, I ſee, is taken at laſt; pray what are the ſentiments of your political companions? I dined ſome time ago with Mr. Lyttelton and Mr. Pitt, who both agreed it was worth twenty thouſand men to the French; which is a light in which I never uſed to conſider it. Any little intimation that you pleaſe to *confer* upon me, enables me to ſeem *wiſe* in this country for a month; particularly if I take care to adjuſt my face accordingly.—

As

As I was returning laſt Sunday from church, whom ſhould I meet in my way, but that *ſweet-ſouled* bard Mr. James Thomſon, in a chaiſe drawn by two horſes lengthways.—I welcomed him into the country, and aſked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to the Leaſows (who had offered me a viſit), which he promiſed to do. So I am in daily expectations of them and all the world this week. I fancy they will laviſh all their praiſes upon *nature*, reſerving none for poor *art* and *me*. But if I ever live, and am able to perfect my ſchemes, I ſhall not deſpair of pleaſing the few I firſt began with; *the few friends prejudiced in my favour*, and then "Fico por los malignatores." Cenſures will not affect me; for I am armed ſo ſtrong in *vanity*, that they will paſs by me as the idle wind which I regard not.—I think it pretty near equal, in a country place, whether you gain the ſmall number of taſters, or the *large crowd* of the vulgar. The latter are more frequently met with, and *gape*, *ſtupent*, and *ſtare* much more. But one would chuſe to pleaſe a few *friends* of taſte before mob or gentry, the great vulgar or the ſmall; becauſe therein one gratifies both one's ſocial paſſions and one's pride, that is, one's *ſelf*-love. Above all things, I would wiſh to pleaſe *you*; and if I have a wiſh

wiſh that projects or is prominent beyond the reſt, it is to ſee you placed to your ſatisfaction near me; but Fortune muſt vary from her uſual treatment before ſhe favours me ſo far.—And yet there *was* a time, when one might probably have prevailed on her. I knew not what to do—The affair was ſo intricately circumſtanced—your ſurprizing ſilence after the hint I gave.—Mr. D— offering to ſerve any friend of mine; nay, preſſing me to uſe the opportunity.—His other relations, his guardians, teizing him with ſure ſymptoms of a rupture in caſe of a refuſal on *their* ſide.—Mr. P— ſoliciting me if the place were *ſold*, which it could not legally be. Friendſhip, propriety, impartiality, ſelf-intereſt (which I *little* regarded), endeavouring to diſtract me; I think I never ſpent ſo diſagreeable an half-year ſince I was born. To cloſe the whole, I could not *foreſee* the event, which is almoſt foretold in your laſt letter, and I knew I could not ſerve you; but I muſt render it a *neceſſary* one. In ſhort, when I can tell you the whole affair at leiſure, you will own it to be of ſuch a nature, that I muſt be ever in ſuſpence concerning my behaviour, and of courſe ſhall never reflect on it with pleaſure. Believe me, with the trueſt affection, yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLVI. To

XLVI. To a Friend, from The Leaſows.

Dear Sir, 1747.

IT is not much above two hours ſince I received your obliging letter, and I am already ſet down to anſwer it.—To ſpeak the truth, I had almoſt given you over: I imagined you had taken umbrage at ſome expreſſion or circumſtance in my epiſtle, and were determined to make me ſenſible you did ſo, by your ſilence. I hope, this error of mine will ſerve to eſtabliſh one rule on *both* ſides.—It is what ought, I am ſure, always to take place, where people wiſh a perpetuity of friendſhip. I mean, never, upon circumſtances of diſreſpect, to admit of circumſtantial evidence.

I AM very grave, ſo you may depend on the ſincerity of all I ſhall ſay. I ſaw ſeveral beauties in your former elegy; but, though it was "formoſa," it did not appear to me "ipſa "forma." I like this that you have now ſent *very* much. It has a ſimplicity which your laſt a little wanted, and has thought *enough*. I begin to be ſeldom pleaſed with the compoſitions of others, or my own; but I could be really

fond

fond of this, with a few alterations, that I could propoſe:—but you muſt know, at the ſame time, that theſe are ſuch as no one would approve beſide myſelf.—I know it.—However, there are ſome ſeeming *faults* in it.

I HAVE been greatly mortified in my correſpondents of late.—I even ſaid in my haſte, All friends are faithleſs.— G—, after a month's expectation, which he had confirmed to me, of ſeeing him here, let me know about a fortnight ſince, that I had more leiſure than him; and, ſince it did not ſuit his convenience to come, I ought to take the opportunity of viſiting him, and ſeeing Derbyſhire while he continues in it.— W— has not wrote to me theſe ſix weeks.—Outing has been, moreover, dumb for the ſame ſpace of time; and I purpoſe in my heart to behave with ſome diſtance towards both, for this neglect (ſee my rule of circumſtantial evidence).

IT is pity you cannot ſpare a day or two to come and ſee me. My wood grows exceſſively pleaſant, and its pleaſantneſs vexes me; becauſe nobody will come that can taſte it.

YOUR

YOUR health, according to your deſcription, is much the ſame with mine; but from the gaiety of your ſtyle and *deſigns*, I collect that it is greatly better.

I HAVE an alcove, ſix elegies, a ſeat, two epitaphs (one upon myſelf), three ballads, four ſongs, and a ſerpentine river, to ſhew you when you come. Will the compoſitions come ſafe to you, if I ſend my book, which contains the *only* copies of ſeveral things (which I could not remember if they were loſt)?—but I will not ſend them. If my horſe gets well, I may eſſay a viſit for two days, and bring them with me, that I may make comments while you read them, as beſeemeth a genuine author to do.

I AM raiſing a green-houſe from the excreſcences of Lord Dudley's; but I do not find that "vient l'appetit en mangeant," that I grow fonder of my collection proportionably as it increaſes.

I SHOULD think myſelf fortunate enough at preſent, if, like you, I could only find that I had been mentioned for a vacant poſt; but I have withdrawn all my views from court-preferment, and fixed them on finding a pot of money, which

which I determine to be the far more probable ſcheme.

I HAVE little health and frequent mortification, ſo that no one need envy me; and yet, I believe, there *are* that do. Is any enviable but ſuch as are unambitious? I never ſhall be able to reckon myſelf of that tribe, which have engroſſed all *happineſs* to themſelves, and left the reſt of the world nothing but hopes and poſſeſſions. Yet I do not much feel the pains of ambition, while I am converſing with ingenious friends of my own level: but in *other* company it hurts me. Let me adviſe you, now I think of it, to dread the company of ſilly people, out-of-the-way people, and, in one word, what men of genius *call the vulgar*. You run ten times the riſque of being mortified, voluntarily or unknowingly, amongſt the latter of theſe, to what you do amongſt men of ſenſe and politeneſs, be they ever ſo malicious;—but my paper is filled.

Do write ſoon,

XLVII. To

XLVII. To the ſame.

It is ſomewhere about the 20th of Sept. 1747, and I write from The Leaſows.

Dear Sir,

I THINK I have lived to out-correſpond almoſt all my correſpondents; whether you are the laſt that is to be ſubdued, I will not ſay; the reſt are ſo fatigued, that they are not able to atchieve a line. Apprized of this, and being by nature diſpoſed to have mercy on the vanquiſhed, "parcere ſubjectis," I ſeldom write a ſyllable more than is requiſite to further ſome ſcheme, or aſcertain ſome interview, the latter of theſe being the purpoſe of *this* mine epiſtle. I am in great hopes I ſhall be at liberty to ſee you ere many weeks be paſt; and would beg of you, in the mean time, to inform me, by a letter, when I am likely, or when very *unlikely*, to meet with you at home. I am detained, juſt at preſent, by continual expectations of the Hagley family.

As I was returning from church on Sunday laſt, whom ſhould I meet in a chaiſe, with two horſes length-ways, but that right friendly bard,

Mr.

Mr. Thomſon? I complimented him upon his arrival in this country, and aſked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to The Leaſows, which he ſaid he would with abundance of pleaſure; and ſo we parted. You will obſerve, that the more ſtreſs I lay upon this viſit, and the more I *diſcover* to you, the more ſubſtantial is my apology for deferring mine into Warwickſhire. I own, I am pleaſed with the proſpect of ſhewing them ſomething at The Leaſows beyond what they expect. I have begun my terras on the high hill I ſhewed you, made ſome conſiderable improvements in Virgil's grove, and finiſhed a walk from it to the houſe, after a manner which you will approve. They are going to build a caſtle in the park round the lodge, which, if well executed, muſt have a good effect; and they are going likewiſe to build a rotund to terminate the viſto. The fault is, that they anticipate every thing which I propoſe to do when I become *rich*; but as that is never likely to be, perhaps it is not of any importance;—but what I term *rich*, implies no great deal; I believe, you are a witneſs to the moderation of my deſires; and I flatter myſelf that you will believe your friend in *that* reſpect ſomething above the vulgar.

"Crede non illum tibi de ſceleſtâ
"Plebe dilectum, neque ſic fidelem,
"Sic lucro averſum, potuiſſe naſci
"Patre pudendo."

If I come to your houſe, poſitively I will not go to ſee Mr. M—. He has been twice as near me as The Grange, with C— L—, and never deemed my place worth ſeeing. I doubt, you are a little too modeſt in praiſing it wherever you go.—Why don't you applaud it with both hands, "utroque pollice?"—"Parcentes ego "dexteras odi, ſparge roſas."—I am ſo very *partial* to my native place, that it ſeems a miracle to me that it is not more famous. But I complain unjuſtly of you; for, as you have always contributed to my happineſs, you have taken every opportunity to contribute to my figure. I wiſh I could ſay the ſame of ſome who have it *more* in their *power*.

I have yet about a thouſand things to ſay to you—not now, though.—Lady L—h's viſit I reſerve till I ſee you. A coach with a coronet is a pretty kind of phænomenon at my door—few prettier, except the face of ſuch a friend as you; for I do not want the grace to prefer a generous

generous and ſpirited friendſhip to all the gewgaws that ambition can *contrive*. I have wrote out my elegies, and heartily wiſh you had them to look over before I come.—I know not how to ſend them.—I ſhall bring and leave ſome poetry with you.—"Thus & odores!" or rather a proper covering for "Thus & odores, & piper, "& quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis."

Adieu! dear Sir.

Believe me ever yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLVIII. To the ſame, with a Song.

Dear Sir, 1747.

BEING juſt returned from a ſmall excurſion, it was with the utmoſt pleaſure that I read over your letter; and, though it abounds both in wit and waggery, I ſit down incontinently to anſwer it with *none*.

THE agreeableneſs of your letters is now heightened by the ſurprize they give me. I

muſt own, I have thought you in a manner loſt to the amuſements in which you once delighted, correſpondences, works of taſte and fancy, &c. If you think the opinion worth removing, you need only favour me with ſuch a letter now and then, and I will place you (in my imagination) where you ſhall ſee all the favourites of fortune cringing at your feet.

I THINK I could add about half a dozen hints to your obſervations on electricity, which might at *leaſt* diſguiſe the facts; and then why will you not put it into ſome news-paper, or monthly pamphlet? you might diſcover yourſelf to whom you have a mind. It would give more than ordinary pleaſure at this time.—Some other will take the hint.—Pity your piece ſhould not have the advantage of novelty as well as of wit!

I DINED and ſtayed a night with Dr. E—; he was extremely obliging, and I am glad of ſuch a friend to viſit at B. He aſked much after you.—He ſhewed me his Ovid—I adviſed him to finiſh ſome one epiſtle *highly*, that he might ſhew it.—The whole will *not take*, though it goes againſt me to tell him ſo. I ſhould be glad he could ſucceed at B.; and could I ſerve him,

him, it would be with a ſafe conſcience; for I take him to excel the reſt of B. phyſicians far in point of ſpeculation and diligence, &c.

I SEND you the ſong you aſked for, and requeſt of you to write me out your new edition of the election verſes; and, at your *leiſure*, a copy of the poem which we altered.

THE LARK.

" Go, tuneful bird, that gladd'ſt the ſkies,
" To Daphne's window ſpeed thy way,
" And there on quiv'ring pinions riſe,
" And there thy vocal art diſplay.

" And if ſhe deign thy notes to hear,
" And if ſhe praiſe thy matin ſong;
" Tell her, the ſounds that ſooth her ear,
" To ſimple Britiſh birds belong.

" Tell her, in livelier plumes array'd,
" The bird from Indian groves may ſhine
" But aſk the lovely, partial maid,
" What are his notes compar'd to thine?

" Then bid her treat that witleſs beau,
" And all his motley race with ſcorn;
" And heal deſerving Damon's woe,
" Who ſings her praiſe, and ſings forlorn."

I am, Sir,

Your moſt faithful friend and ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

HAVE you read Watſon, Martyn, and Freke, on electricity? I accidentally met with the two former, by which my head is rendered almoſt giddy—electrics, non-electrics, electrics *per ſe*, and bodies that are only conductors of electricity, have a plaguy bad effect on ſo vortical a brain as mine.

I WILL infallibly ſpend a week with you, perhaps about February, if it ſuits you; though I think too it muſt be later.

I HAVE been painting in water colours, during a viſit I made, flowers. I would recommend the amuſement to you, if you can allow it the time that is expedient.

I TRUST you will give me one entire week in the ſpring, when my late alterations may exhibit themſelves to advantage,

XLIX. To the ſame, after a Viſit.

Sunday,
Dear Mr. Jago, Feb. 14, 1747-8.

I AM tempted once more to apologize for the unſeaſonable viſit I paid you, though I feel myſelf entirely innocent in that reſpect, even as much as the poſt-boy was guilty; for had my previous letter arrived in due time, you had then been furniſhed with an opportunity of waving my company till a more convenient ſeaſon. I was *only*, or, at leaſt, *chiefly* uneaſy upon *your* account. I ſpent my time very agreeably, and only leſs ſo than I might, had I not been conſcious to myſelf, that I was intruding upon domeſtic tenderneſſes.

I SPENT the Sunday night and the next day at Mr. Wren's; and am now juſt returned from Mr. Dolman's, who has made me a genteel preſent of Spence's Polymetis. I have not yet *read* many dialogues in it, but I have *dipped* in ſeveral; and have reaſon to be well enough ſatisfied with the ſimple and uninvidious manner in which he has introduced Mr. Lowth's poem. I have long known of this intended *introduction*

(which I accidentally found to have been settled betwixt them before I published *mine* on the same subject), and a little dreaded the *form* of it. I have long ago made considerable improvements in mine, and have a mind one day to publish it once more; after which, let it sleep in peace. I have sometimes thought of printing my neat title-page thus, viz. "Poems; consisting of Songs, Odes, and Elegies, with an improved edition of The Judgement of Hercules, and of The School-mistress." But I have but very few critical acquaintance, and I live at a great distance from those I have; stationed amongst the *makers* and the *wearers* of hobnails;

"Far from the joys that with my soul agree,
"From *wit*, from *learning*—very far from thee."

PARNELL.

I know I have thrown a great number of careless things into your hands. I know to *whom* I intrusted my follies; but I know *not* what they *are*:—I believe, in general, that they consist of mis-begotten embryos and abortive births, which it had been merely decent to have buried in—some part of my garden; but I was morally assured, that you would expose nothing of mine to my disadvantage. As to some that are *less imperfect*,

imperfect, you promised your observations, and I desire you would make them with the utmost freedom. I can bear any censure which you shall pass by way of letter, and I beg once more that you would not be sparing. It will be esteemed as great a favour as you can do me. When they have gone through your hands, and those of one or two more friends, I shall, perhaps, think of publishing them; though as to that, much depends upon the advice I receive, and previously on the opportunity I have of receiving. I am in hopes that you will be pretty full in discovering to me, *which you dislike the least*, *what faults you find*, and *what improvements they are capable of*. I set you a tedious task; but I will return the favour as far as I am able, either in *the same way* or any other. This brings me to say, that, if there be any compositions of yours that you would have me correct (and there are several of which I want a copy), I would beg you to send them. Your Blackbird excels any singing-bird I ever heard, and I beseech you to convey it to The Leasows by the next opportunity, that he may acquire fame near other rills, and in other valleys, than those in which he was produced.—I have many compliments to make in your country; to Mr. H—, Mrs. N—, Mrs. J—, Mr. F—, Mr. T—, and

your

your brother. If I go over to Mr. W—'s, I will assuredly call and spend a night with you.—*That* is precarious.—But whether I do or not, I would willingly hope to see you this spring and summer more than once; as a *critic* and as a *friend*: nor do I forget the promise of Mr. H— and Mr. F—;—but of these things more when I send for the papers, which I purpose to do to-morrow fortnight, that is, the twenty-ninth of February.

I HAVE suffered greatly by railing at the black button on a parson's great coat. Had Mr. Hall's been thus distinguished, he could not have mistaken mine for his own; which latter I sent in order to be commuted at Birmingham, and was almost starved to death before I could accomplish the exchange. There is no trifling with any *part* of orthodoxy with impunity.—That is the moral.

I HAVE received a very obliging letter from Lady Luxborough, wherein she tells me, that Lady Hartford admires my place in her description. Mr. Thomson is intimate at Lady Hartford's; and I suppose Lady Hartford may have been informed by L. L. that Mr. Thomson has been here; so I conclude, in mere vanity, that my farm is advancing in reputation.

WHAT think you of Mr. Carte's Hiſtory? or what of his narrative concerning the Pretender's touching for the King's evil? I think one is not, however, to give up his book entirely; becauſe, with *all his ſuperſtition*, he may have ſeveral anecdotes that one would like to read.

I HAVE had great expectations from the beautiful veins of a piece of oak of which I have had a table made; but, upon a thorough ſurvey of it, it is ſo like nothing in the world as old B—'s callimanco night-gown.

I HAVE nothing to add worth beginning upon another page; but I happened not to make a regular concluſion in my preceding one.

YOU muſt give me ſome time to colour you a collection of flowers (that octavo edition I ſhewed you here); and then I will make Mrs. Jago a preſent of it. I believe I can engage Mr. Dolman to aſſiſt me, who is much my ſuperior in point of accuracy; and the inſcription at the beginning is to run ſomehow thus:

"ELE-

" ELEGANTISSIMAE PVELLAE
" DOROTHEAE FANCOVRT,
" QVAE PERDILECTI SVI CONDISCIPVLI
" RICHARDI IAGO
" AMORES MERVIT,
" D. D.
" GVLIELMVS SHENSTONE;
" DEBITAE NYMPHIS OPIFEX CORONAE."

That is, by trade a garland-maker; but this inſcription I may alter, if I can think of any thing more expreſſive of the regard which I have ever born and ſtill bear you.

LORD Dudley is gone, and franks are no more. I have nothing to wiſh you but health and preferment;—" det vitam, det opes;—" with theſe you will eaſily compound that cordial *happineſs*, having every other ingredient that is requiſite at hand.

I am, moſt affectionately,

Your very faithful friend, &c.

W. SHENSTONE.

L. To Mr. JAGO.

Dear Sir, The Leaſows, Mar. 23, 1747-8.

I HAVE ſent Tom over for the papers which I left under your inſpection; having nothing to add upon this head, but that the more *freely* and *particularly* you give me your opinion, the greater will be the obligation which I ſhall have to acknowledge.

I SHALL be very glad, if I happen to receive a good large bundle of your own compoſitions; in regard to which, I will obſerve any commands which you ſhall pleaſe to lay upon me.

I AM favoured with a certain correſpondence, by way of letter, which I told you I ſhould be glad to cultivate; and I find it very entertaining.

PRAY did you receive my anſwer to your laſt letter, ſent by way of London? I ſhould be extremely ſorry to be debarred the pleaſure of writing to you by the poſt, as often as I feel a violent propenſity to deſcribe the notable incidents of my life; which amount to about as

as much as the tinsel of your little boy's hobby-horse.

I AM on the point of purchasing a couple of busts for the niches in my hall; and believe me, my good friend, I never proceed one step in ornamenting my little farm, but I enjoy the hopes of rendering it more agreeable to you, and the small circle of acquaintance which sometimes favour me with their company.

I SHALL be extremely glad to see you and Mr. Fancourt when the trees are green; that is, in May; but I would not have you content yourself with a single visit this summer. If Mr. Hardy (to whom you will make my compliments) inclines to favour me so far, you must calculate so as to wait on him whenever he finds it convenient; though I have *better hopes* of making his reception here agreeable to him when my Lord Dudley comes down.—I wonder how he would like the scheme I am upon, of exchanging a large tankard for a silver standish.

I HAVE had a couple of paintings given me since you were here. One of them is a Madona, valued, as it is said, at ten guineas in Italy,

Italy, but which you would hardly purchaſe at the price of five ſhillings. However, I am endeavouring to make it out to be one of Carlo Maratt's, who was a firſt hand, and famous for Madonas; even ſo as to be nick-named "Car-"tuccio delle Madonne" by Salvator Roſa. Two letters of the cypher (CM) agree; what ſhall I do with regard to the third? It is a ſmall piece, and ſadly blackened. It is about the ſize (though not quite the ſhape) of the Bacchus over the parlour door, and has much ſuch a frame.

A PERSON may amuſe himſelf almoſt as cheaply as he pleaſes. I find no ſmall delight in rearing all ſorts of poultry; geeſe, turkeys, pullets, ducks, &c. I am alſo ſomewhat ſmitten with a blackbird which I have purchaſed: a very fine one; brother by father, but not by mother, to the unfortunate bird you ſo beautifully deſcribe, a copy of which deſcription you muſt not fail to ſend me;—but, as I ſaid before, one may eaſily habituate one's ſelf to cheap amuſements; that is, *rural* ones (for all town amuſements are horridly expenſive);—I would have you cultivate your garden; plant flowers, have a bird or two in the hall (they will at *leaſt* amuſe your children); write now and

and then a ſong; buy now and then a book; write now and then a letter to

Your moſt ſincere friend,

and affectionate ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

P. S. I HOPE you have exhauſted all your ſpirit of criticiſm upon my verſes, that you may have none left to cavil at this letter; for I am aſhamed to think, that *you*, in particular, ſhould receive the dulleſt I ever wrote in my life. Make my compliments to Mrs. Jago.—She can go a little abroad, you ſay.—Tell her, I ſhould be proud to ſhew her The Leaſows. Adieu!

LI. To Mr. ——, on his Marriage.

This was written Auguſt 21, 1748; but not ſent till the 28th.

Dear Sir,

HOW little ſoever I am inclined to write at this time, I cannot bear that you ſhould cenſure me of unkindneſs in ſeeming to overlook the late change in your ſituation. It will, I *hope*,

I *hope*, be eſteemed ſuperfluous in *me* to ſend you my moſt cordial wiſhes that you may be happy; but it will, perhaps, be *ſomething* more ſignificant to ſay, that I believe you *will*; building my opinion on the knowledge I have long had of your own temper, and the account you give me of the perſon's whom you have made choice of, to whom I deſire you to pay my ſincere and moſt affectionate compliments.

I SHALL always be glad to find you *præſentibus æquum*, though I ſhould always be pleaſed when I ſaw you *tentantem majora*. I think you ſhould neglect no *opportunity* at this time of life to puſh your fortune ſo far as an *elegant* competency, that you be not embarraſſed with thoſe kind of ſolicitudes towards the evening of your day;

" Ne te ſemper inops agitet vexetque cupido,
" Ne pavor, & rerum *mediocriter utilium* ſpes!"

I would have you acquire, if poſſible, what the world calls, with ſome *propriety*, an *eaſy* fortune; and what I interpret, ſuch a fortune as allows of ſome inaccuracy and inattention, that one may not be continually in ſuſpenſe about the laying out a *ſhilling*;—this kind of advice may ſeem extremely dogmatical in *me*; but, if it carries any haughty air, I will obviate it by owning that I never *acted* as I ſay. I have loſt *my* road to happineſs, I confeſs;

fefs; and, inſtead of purſuing the way to the fine lawns, and venerable oaks, which diſtinguiſh the region of it, I am got into the pitiful parterre-garden of amuſement, and view the nobler ſcenes at a *diſtance*. I think I can ſee the *road* too that *leads* the better way, and can ſhew it others; but I have many miles to meaſure back before I can get into it myſelf, and no kind of reſolution to take a ſingle ſtep. My chief amuſements at preſent are the ſame they have long been, and lie ſcattered about my farm. The French have what they call a *parque ornée*; I ſuppoſe, approaching about as near to a garden as the park at Hagley. I give my place the title of a *ferme ornée*; though, if I had money, I ſhould hardly confine myſelf to ſuch decorations as that name requires. I have made great improvements; and the *conſequence* is, that I long to have you ſee them.

I HAVE not heard whether Miſs ——'s match proceeded. — I ſuppoſe your objections were grounded on the perſon's *age* and *temper*; and that they had the leſs weight, as they ſuppoſed you acted indiſcreetly yourſelf: I can ſay but little on the occaſion. You know —— better than I do. Only this I muſt add, that I have ſo great an eſteem for your ſiſter, that it will be neceſſary

neceſſary to my *eaſe*, that whoever marries her ſhe ſhould be happy.

I HAVE little hopes that I ſhall now you ſee often in this country; though it would be *you*, in all probability, as ſoon as *any*, that would take a journey of fifty miles,

"To ſee the *pooreſt* of the ſons of men."

The truth is, my affairs are miſerably embroiled, by my own negligence, and the non-payment of tenants. I believe, I ſhall be forced to ſeize on one next week for three years and a half's rent, due laſt Lady-day; an affair to which I am greatly averſe, both through *indolence* and *compaſſion*. I hope, however, I ſhall be always able (as I am ſure I ſhall be deſirous) to entertain a friend of a *philoſophical regimen*, ſuch as you and Mr. Whiſtler; and that will be all I can do.

HAGLEY park is conſiderably improved ſince you were here, and they have built a caſtle by way of ruin on the higheſt part of it, which is *juſt* ſeen from my *wood*; but by the removal of a tree or two (growing in a wood that joins to the park, and which, fortunately enough, belongs to Mr. Dolman and me), I believe it may be rendered a conſiderable object here.

I PURPOSE to write to Mr. Whiſtler either this poſt or the next. The fears you ſeemed in upon my account are very kind, but have no grounds. I am, dear Mr. ——, habitually and ſincerely,

Your moſt affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

MY humble ſervice to your neighbours.—Smith (whom you knew at Derby) will publiſh a print of my grove in a ſmall collection.

LII. To Mr. JAGO, with an Invitation to The Leaſows.

Sept. 3, Saturday night, 1748.

Dear Mr. Jago,

I HARDLY know whether it will be prudent in me to own, that I wrote you a *long letter* upon the receipt of your laſt, which I now have upon my table. I condemn this habit in *myſelf* entirely, and ſhould, I am ſure, be very unhappy, if my friends, by my example, ſhould

ſhould be induced to contract the ſame. The truth is, I had not expreſſed myſelf in it to my mind, and it was full of blots, and blunders, and interlinings; yet, ſuch as it was, it had wearied my attention, and given me a diſinclination to begin it afreſh. I am now impatient to remove any ſcruple you may have concerning my grateful ſenſe of all your favours, and the invariable continuance of my affection and eſteem.—I find by your laſt obliging letter, that my machinations and devices are not entirely private.—You knew of my draught of Hagley Caſtle about the bigneſs of a barley-corn; you knew of our intended viſit to Lady Luxborough's; and I muſt add, Mr. Thomas Hall knew of my contrivance for the embelliſhment of Mr. Hardy's houſe. Nothing is there hid that ſhall not be revealed.—Our viſit to Barrels is now over and paſt.—Lady Luxborough has ſeen Hagley Caſtle in the original:—and as to my deſire that my draught might be ſhewn to no *Chriſtian* ſoul, you ſurely did but ill comply with it, when you ſhewed that *drawing* to a *Clergyman*. However, you may have acted up to my *real* meaning, if you have taken care not to ſhew it to any connoiſſeur. I meant chiefly to guard againſt any one that knows the rules, in whoſe

eyes, I am ſure, it could not turn to my credit.—Pray how do you like the feſtoons dangling over the oval windows?—It is the chief advantage in repairing an old houſe, that one may deviate from the rules without any extraordinary cenſure.

I WILL not trouble you *now* with many particulars. The intent of Tom's coming is, to deſire your company and Mrs. Jago's this week.—I ſhould be extremely glad if your convenience would allow you to come on Monday or Tueſday; but, if it is *entirely* impracticable, I would beſeech you not to put off the viſit longer than the Monday following, for the leaves of my groves begin to fall a great pace.—I beg once more, you would let no ſmall inconvenience prevent your being here on Monday.—As to my viſit at Icheneton, you may depend upon it ſoon after; and I hope you will not ſtand upon punctilio, when I mention my inclination that you may all take a walk through my coppices before their beauty is much impaired. Were I in a ſprightly vein, I would aim at ſaying ſomething genteel by way of *anſwer* to Mrs. Jago's compliment.—As it is, I can only thank her for the *ſubſtance*, and applaud the

politeneſs

politeneſs of it.—I poſtpone all other matters till I ſee you. I am, habitually and ſincerely,

Your moſt affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mr. Hardy.

P. S. I AM not accuſtomed, my dear friend, to ſend you a *blank* page; nor can I be content to do ſo now.

I THANK you very *ſenſibly* for the verſes with which you honour me. I think them good lines, and ſo do others that have ſeen them; but you will give me leave, when I ſee you, to propoſe ſome little alteration. As to an epiſtle, it would be executed with *difficulty*, and I would have it turn to your credit as well as my own. But you have certainly of late acquired an *eaſe* in writing; and I am tempted to think, that what you write henceforth will be univerſally good. Perſons that have ſeen your elegies like "*The* "*Blackbirds*" beſt, as it is moſt aſſuredly the moſt *correct*; but I, who pretend to great penetration, can foreſee that "The Linnets" *will* be made to excel.—More of this when I ſee you. Poor Miſs G—, J— R— ſays, is married; and

poor Mr. Thomſon, Mr. Pitt tells me, is *dead*.—He was to have been at Hagley this week, and then I ſhould probably have ſeen him *here*.—As it is, I will erect an urn in Virgil's Grove to his memory.—I was really as much ſhocked to hear of his death, as if I had known and loved him for a number of years:—God knows, I lean on a very few friends; and if they drop me, I become a wretched miſanthrope.

LIII. To the ſame.

Sunday night,
Sept. 11, 1748.

Dear Mr. Jago,

I TAKE this opportunity of acknowledging the juſtice of your excuſes. Mrs. Jago's preſent circumſtances render her viſit quite impracticable, and yours I have the ſame kind of reaſon to diſpenſe with; as I gueſs, that ſhe could as ſoon take a journey *herſelf* at this time, as bear that *you* ſhould.—But to ſay I was not greatly mortified, would be doing myſelf the greateſt injuſtice. *Diſappointed* I was, you may be ſure, to hear excuſes; even as much as Sir John Falſtaff, when Mr. Dombledon put him in mind of *ſecurity*, inſtead of ſending him *two* and

thirty

thirty yards of ſattin to make him a *ſhort* cloak. And on the whole, I began to accuſe you and Mrs. Jago of *colloguing* together, to fix your viſit at a time when you were well aſſured you ſhould have an *apology* to ſend me inſtead. Now, if I ſhould preſs this accuſation, pray how would you evade the force of it?—The next thing I am to ſpeak to, is your verſes. I have made you my acknowledgments *before*; and as you are ſo good as to accept them, I will not trouble you with additional profeſſions, or repetitions of the paſt. I will depend upon your good-ſenſe for an excuſe, if I only add what I think proper as to any *alteration*; wherein I have a view to *your* credit, as well as my *own*. I confeſs, it requires ſome nicety to inſcribe ſuch an elegy as The Gold-finches without the danger you foreſaw. But I think it *may* be done (and *is* pretty nearly) in ſuch manner that no man of *taſte* will be tempted to ridicule it; and as for the vulgar, of whatever *rank* they be, it is abſolutely neceſſary many times to *give them up*. *Taſte* and *tenderneſs* are abſolutely connected; and you may very readily call to mind ſome charming things, that muſt excite the laughter of your men of *fire* and *banter*, but are by no means thought the worſe of by men of *true genius*. I will only mention Andrew Marvel's

Fawn in Dryden's Miſcellanies. I incloſe the elegy with ſome few propoſed alterations, ſo I will riſque the *filling* my *letter* with criticiſm. I alſo incloſe the other verſes you ſent me, which I think good ones, and to ſtand in need of little alteration, beſide that of the inglorious name at the head of them; to which, notwithſtanding, I will never ſubmit. Pray who is the young gentleman that tranſlates your elegy into Latin?—The new dreſs will give you ſome amuſement; and, if theſe lines *be* the product of the genius of a boy of that age, he will in a year's time be able to extend the fame of your compoſitions. I ſhall then be glad to ſee The Goldfinches under his hand; though I have no extraordinary fondneſs for the Latin poetry of a modern; at leaſt, till your eldeſt ſon begins to tranſlate our madrigals.

I HAVE not yet ſeen Mr. Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence.—I waited for a ſmaller edition; but am now too impatient not to ſend for it on Thurſday next.—I am fully bent on raiſing a neat urn to him in my lower grove, if Mr. Lyttelton does not inſcribe one at Hagley *before* me. But I ſhould be extremely glad of your advice whereabouts to place it.—You ſpeak of my dwelling in the Caſtle of Indolence, and I verily

believe

believe I *do*. There is something like enchantment in my present inactivity; for, without any kind of lett or impediment to the correction of my trifles that I see, I am in no wise able to make the least advances. I think within myself I could proceed if you were here; and yet I have reason to believe, if you *were* here, we should only ramble round the groves, and chat away the time; and perhaps *that*, upon the *whole*, is of full as much importance.—I do not know but I do myself some little injustice here, for I *have* wrote out my *levities*, and my *sonnets*, good and bad, with many ornaments from the pencil; and the next thing I do will be to transcribe my elegies. The fault is, I take no pains to *improve* what I transcribe, and, consequently, am only able to exhibit my nonsense in a fairer dress.—You must give me leave, ere it be long, to insert two or three lines (I think in *verse*) before Mrs. Jago's flower-piece.—I am sure, I am obliged to her for a fruit I greatly love.—It was not entirely ripe; but it was the only one I have tasted since I was last in London.—Yesterday dined here Lady Luxborough, Mr. Outing and Mr. Hall, Lord Dudley, Miss Lea, Counsellor Corbet and Mr. Sanders, Mr. Perry Mrs. Perry and Miss Dolman, and half a dozen footmen beside my own servants and labourers; so you may guess we had

had no small fracas. I now sit down amid solitude and silence, and can hear little else beside the pendulum of my clock;—yet my spirits are no way sunk, but afford me just such a temperature of mind as inclines me to write to some familiar friend: albeit I have a thousand things to *talk* of to you, which I do not care to *write*. I hope to be able to spend a few days with Mr. Hardy, before his melons are all gone; and yet I would not have him keep one a *moment* longer upon *my* account. I desire he would accept of my compliments, as I trust he will.—Franks at present run low with me; but I send you *one*, which you cannot use so soon but I shall be able to send you others immediately. I wish I could send you any thing more than the means of obliging,

Sir,

Your most affectionate friend,

W. S.

LIV. To

LIV. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, Sunday, Nov. 13.

I MUST fairly own, that I have not ſate down till now to return my acknowledgments for your laſt moſt obliging favour; and yet I have been doing ſo in *imagination* almoſt every day ſince I received it. I have only to deſire that you would not think me *ſtupid*; and then you muſt of courſe conclude me highly delighted, to find the verſes which had ſo greatly pleaſed me, made ſo *particularly intereſting* to me. In teſtimony hereof, I have cauſed theſe my letters to be made *patent*, &c. Furthermore, I am glad to ſee you diſſent from ſome alterations I propoſed, for which, generally ſpeaking, I think I can ſee your reaſons. As to any little matter which I have to mention farther, I chuſe to defer it till I wait on Mr. Hardy; which I purpoſe to do before this month is out. It may poſſibly *happen* the beginning of the next week; but I dare not lay ſuch ſtreſs upon a future *event*, as to give you a commiſſion to ſay ſo much to *him*. Inſtead thereof, pleaſe to make him my compliments, and tell him I talk of coming *very ſoon*.

I BORROWED

I BORROWED Dodsley's Miscellany of Lady Luxborough, in which are many good things. I long to be making a mark on the head of every copy (as I would do were the books my *own*). Here a cypher; there an asterism of five points, and there one of eight.—If you, and Mr. W—, and Mr. G—, and I, were together for a fortnight, to correct and revise, might not we make a miscellany of *originals* that would sell?—My fingers itch to be at it;—but I fear it cannot be.—Thomson's poem amused me greatly.—I think his plan has faults; particularly, that he should have said nothing of the diseases attending lazines in his *first* canto, but reserved them to strike us *more affectingly* in the last; but, on the whole, who would have thought that Thomson could have so well imitated a person remarkable for simplicity both of sentiment and phrase?

I STUDY no connections in a letter; and so I proceed to tell you, that I have got a machine to exhibit landscapes, &c. to advantage. It costs about fourteen shillings, and I recommend one to you or Mr. Hardy.—Smith's Views (with a little colouring) appear ravishingly;—but if you are not content with *amusement*, and want *fame* (which differs about as much as *fox*-hunting from *hare*-hunting), you must *print*.—However,

if

if you can acquiesce in a *limited reputation*, to give you a proper weight at all your visiting-places (which I think enough for all reasonable ends and purposes), take the following receipt.

"A Receipt to make FAME.

"TAKE a shoe-maker into your parlour (that "is reputed a good workman), and bid him pro- "cure a piece of red or blue Morocco leather; let "him shape this into the size of a quarter of a "sheet of paper, or it may be something larger. "Let him double it in such a manner as to "leave some part to wrap over; then stitch it "neatly at the ends, lining it either with silk "or the best yellow leather he can meet with. "Then must you bespeak a silver clasp, which "you *may* have gilded; but be sure it be neatly "*chased*, and properly annexed to the aforesaid "Morocco leather. Make a present of this "to the prettiest girl you know, but filled with "half a dozen of your best compositions; take "care that one be in praise of *her* ingenuity. "For modesty sake, desire her not to shew them "to any living soul; but, at the same time, be "careful that your clasp be splendid, and your

"letter-

" letter-case made according to the foregoing " directions."

Adieu! seriously yours,

W. S.

LV. To a Friend, disappointing him of a Visit.

June, 1749.

FIE on Mr. N—! he has disappointed me of the most seasonable visit that heart could wish or desire.—My flowers in blossom, my walks newly cleaned, my neighbours invited, and I languishing for lack of your company! Mean time you are going to dance attendance on a courtier.—Would to God! he may disappoint *you*, according to the usual practice of those gentlemen;—I mean, by giving you a far better living than you ever expected.

I HAVE no sooner *made* than I am ready to *re-call* that wish, in order to substitute another in its place; which is, that you may rather squat yourself down upon a fat-goose living in Warwickshire,

Warwickſhire, or one in Staffordſhire, or perhaps Worceſterſhire, of the *ſame denomination*. I do not mention Shropſhire, becauſe I think I am more remote from the main body of that county than I am from either of the others. But, nevertheleſs, by all means wait on Mr. N—; ſhew him all reſpect, yet ſo as not to lay out any of the profits of your *contingent* living in a black velvet waiſtcoat and breeches to appear before him. True merit needeth nought of this. Beſides, peradventure, you may not receive the firſt quarter's income of it this half year. He will probably do ſomething for you one time or other; but you ſhall never go into Ireland, that is certain, for leſs than a deanry; not for leſs than the deanry of St. Patrick's, if you take my advice. Lower your hopes only to advance your ſurprize; "*grata* ſuper-"venient quæ non ſperabimus." Come to me *as you may*. A week is elapſed ſince you *began* to be detained; you may ſurely come over in a fortnight now at fartheſt;—I will be at home.—However, write directly; you know our letters are long upon their journey.—I expected you the beginning of every week, till I received your laſt letter, *impatiently*.

For my part, I begin to wean myself from all hopes and expectations whatever.—I feed my wild-ducks, and I water my carnations! Happy enough, if I could extinguish my ambition *quite*, or *indulge* (what I hope I feel in an equal degree) the desire of being something more beneficial in my sphere.—Perhaps some few other circumstances would want also to be adjusted.

I have just read Lord Bolingbroke's three letters, which I like as much as most pieces of politics I ever read. I admire, especially, the spirit of the style. I as much admire *at* the editor's unpopular preface.—I know the family hitherto *seemed* to make it a point to conceal Pope's affair; and now, the editor, under Lord B's inspection, not only relates, but invites people to think the worst of it.—What *collateral* reasons my Lord may have for thinking ill of Mr. Pope, I cannot say; but surely it is not *political* to lessen a person's character that had done one so much honour.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate

W. Shenstone.

I have

I HAVE this moment received a long letter from Lady Luxborough; and you are to look on all I ſaid concerning both Lord Bolingbroke's affair and her reſentment as premature. My Lady's daughter and ſon-in-law viſit her next week.

LVI. To Mr. JAGO.

From The Leaſows, as it appears on a rainy Evening, June, 1749.

Dear Sir,

IT would probably be ſo long before you can receive this letter by the poſt, that I cannot think of ſubjecting my *thanks for your laſt*, or my *hopes of ſeeing you ſoon*, to *ſuch* an *uncertainty*.—I ſhall not now have it in my power to meet you at Mr. Wren's *immediately*, ſo would loſe no time in requeſting your company here *next week*, if you pleaſe. I hope Mrs. Jago alſo will accompany you, and that you will ſet out the firſt day of the week, even Monday; that you may not leave me in leſs than ſix days time, under a pretence of neceſſity. As to the verſes

you were ſo kind to convey, I will take occaſion when you come

—— "To find out, like a friend,
"Something to blame, and mickle to com-
"mend."

So I ſay no more at *preſent* on that head.

I LOVE to *read* verſes, but I *write* none. "Petti, nihil me ſicut ante juvat ſcribere!"—I will not ſay *none*; for I wrote the following at breakfaſt yeſterday, and they are all I have wrote ſince I ſaw you. They are now in one of the root-houſes of Virgil's Grove, for the admonition of my good friends the vulgar; of whom I have multitudes every Sunday evening, and who very fortunately believe in fairies, and are no judges of poetry:

"HERE in cool grot, and moſſy cell,
"We tripping fawns and fairies dwell.
"Tho' rarely ſeen by mortal eye,
"Oft as the moon, aſcended high,
"Darts thro' yon limes her quiv'ring beam,
"We friſk it near this cryſtal ſtream.

"THEN fear to ſpoil theſe ſacred bow'rs;
"Nor wound the ſhrubs, nor crop the flow'rs;

"So

" So may your path with ſweets abound!
" So may your couch with reſt be crown'd!
" But ill-betide or nymph or ſwain,
" Who dares theſe hallow'd haunts profane."

OBERON.

I SUPPOSE the rotund at Hagley is compleated, but I have not ſeen it hitherto; neither do I often journey or viſit *any where*, except when a ſhrub or flower is upon the point of bloſſoming near my walks.—I forget one viſit I lately made in my neighbourhood, to a young clergyman of taſte and ingenuity. His name is Pixell; he plays *finely* upon the violin, and very well upon the harpſichord: has ſet many things to muſic, ſome in the *ſoft way*, with which I was much delighted. He is young, and has time to improve himſelf. He gave me an opportunity of being acquainted with him by frequently viſiting, and introducing company to my walks.—I met him one morning with an Italian in my grove, and our acquaintance has been growing ever ſince. — He has a ſhare in an eſtate that is near me, and lives there at preſent; but I doubt will not do ſo long;—when you come, I will ſend for him.—Have you read my Lord Bolingbroke's Eſſays on Patriotiſm, &c.? and have you read Merope? and do you take in the

Magazin des Londres? and pray how does your garden flouriſh? I warrant, you do not yet know the difference betwixt a ranunculus and an anemone.—God help ye!—Come, to me and be informed of the nature of all plants, "from "the cedar on Mount Lebanon to the hyſſop "that ſpringeth out of the wall."—Pray do not fail to decorate your new garden, whence you may tranſplant all kinds of flowers into your verſes. If by chance you make a viſit at I—— fifty years hence, from ſome diſtant part of England, ſhall you forget this little angle where you uſed to muſe and ſing?

"En unquam, &c.
"Poſt aliquot, tua regna videns mirabere,
"ariſtas."

I EXPECT by the return of Tom to receive a trifle that will amuſe you. It is a gold ſeal of Vida's head, given by Vertue to a relation of mine, who publiſhed Vida, and introduced Vertue into buſineſs.—Perhaps you remember Mr. Triſtram of Hampton, and the day we ſpent there from ſchool; it was his.

I am, very cordially,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LVII. To

LVII. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1749.

IT is now Sunday evening, and I have been exhibiting myſelf in my walks to no leſs than a hundred and fifty people, and that with no leſs ſtate and vanity than a Turk in his ſeraglio.—I have *ſome* hopes of ſeeing you *this* week; but if theſe ſhould happen to be fruſtrated, I ſhall find them revive with double ardour and vivacity the next. Did not you tell me of a treatiſe that your Mr. Miller had, where the author endeavours to vindicate and eſtabliſh Gothic architecture? and does not the ſame man explain it alſo by draughts on copper plates? That very book, or rather the title and the author's name, I want.—I ſhall never, I believe, be entirely partial to Goths or Vandals either; but I think, by the aſſiſtance of ſome ſuch treatiſe, I could ſketch out ſome charming Gothic temples and Gothic benches for garden-ſeats.—I do alſo eſteem it extremely ridiculous to permit another perſon to deſign *for* you, when by ſketching out your own plans you *appropriate* the merit of all you build, and feel a double pleaſure from any praiſes which it receives.—I

had here laſt Wedneſday Dean Lyttelton, Mr. William Lyttelton, Commodore Weſt, Miſs Lyttelton, and Miſs Weſt. They drank tea, and went round my walks, where they ſeemed aſtoniſhed they had been ſo long ignorant of the beauties of the place; ſaid, in general, every thing that was *complaiſant* or *friendly*; and left me highly delighted with *their* viſit, and with room to hope for many more. Mean time, why do not *you* come? I *do* ſay you are not Pylades.—What! you think, becauſe you have an agreeable wife, and five fine children, that you muſt employ all your time in careſſing them at home, or laying ſchemes for their emolument abroad? Is this public ſpirit? is this virtue? or, if it be virtue, doſt thou think, becauſe thou art *vartuous*, there muſt be no cakes and ale? is it not your duty to partake of them with a *friend* ſometimes; eaſing and relieving him under what Boileau calls,

"Le penible fardeau de n'avoir rien à faire;"

and what Pope (*ſtealing* from the former) denominates

"The pains and penalties of idleneſs."

PRAY

PRAY come the first day of the week, and let Mr. Fancourt accompany you.—I have not much to add by way of news. The Duke of Somerset is going to lay out thirty thousand pounds upon Northumberland-house; nine houses to be purchased and pulled down on the other side the Strand for stables; the Strand there to be widened: I cannot tell you half; but one thing more I will, which is, that there will be a chapel on one side of the quadrangle, with a Gothic wainscot and cieling, and painted glass; and ☞ in it a Dutch stove, contrived so as look like a tomb with an urn upon it.

WHAT need I *write* all this? am I not to see you in a few days?—Not a word more positively; saving what may serve to assure you that I am, dear Sir,

Inviolably yours,

The Leasows,
July 9, 1749.

W. SHENSTONE.

LVIII. To

LVIII. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, The Leaſows, Mar. 15, 1749-50.

THOUGH I have not hitherto troubled you with a letter, I have not been void either of *inquiry* or *information*, concerning the ſtate of your affairs, and of Mr. Hardy's health. Indeed it is now ſeveral weeks ſince I collected ſome particulars from your brother, and I am now impatient for further intelligence. As to the circumſtances of our friendly reception at Wroxall, Mr. John Jago has probably enough acquainted you with them. He *would*, however, ſeduce me to give you a diſtinct account; being aſſured, as he ſays, that Mr. Wren's behaviour muſt afford a good ſubject for drollery. I do not know how far this would be proper; but I think, when I write again to my friend Wren, to give *him* a ſketch of his own character, juſt as it appeared to us during the time of our viſit. Perhaps it may avail a little. Amidſt his violent paſſion for gardening, if he would but prune away ſome wild excreſcences from one or two branches of his character, he might bring himſelf to bear good fruit. He ſhould *weed* his *mind* a little; where there has ſprung up a moſt luxuriant

luxuriant crop of puns, that threaten to choak all its wholesome productions. "Spinas animo "fortius quam agro evellat." He has good sense and good-nature; pity he should disguise them.—Not but that it is better to have the *substance* alone than the *forms alone*, and so I conclude. Since I came home, I have done little else than plant bushes, hazel, hawthorn, crabtree, elder, &c. together with some flowering shrubs that I have had given me, and some that I have purchased to the amount of twenty shillings. I think nothing remarkable has occurred; only, one miserable tempestuous day, I had my Lord Stamford, who called to see my walks. My Lord promised to come again in the summer, and invited me more than once to Enville. By the way, he is now building a Gothic green-house by Mr. Miller's direction, and intends to build castles, and God-knows-what. By all accounts, the place is well worth seeing when you come into the country, which I hope you will not fail to do this spring. Pray do not you embroil me with Mr. Miller, in regard to *any* observations I made in his walks. Remember there were a great many things with which I was highly delighted; and forget that there were a few also which I seemed less to admire. Indeed, I thought it idle to

regulate

regulate my expreſſions, amongſt friends only, by the ſame rules which I ought to obſerve in mixed company. I ſay *ought*, for *he* has been exceedingly favourable to *me* in his repreſentation of The Leaſows.—I hope to ſee Mr. Fancourt with you, when you come this ſpring; and why not your brother? he can ſpend half a week every now and then at Wroxal.

I HAVE nothing to *inſert* or *incloſe* in this letter that can render it at all agreeable.—I cannot *write*, I cannot *think*. I can juſt muſter up attention enough to give orders to my workmen; I ſaunter about my grounds, take ſnuff, and read Clariſſa. This laſt part of my employment threatens to grow extremely *tedious*: not but the author is a man of *genius* and *nice obſervation*; but he might be leſs *prolix*. I will ſend you "The Life of Socrates" when I can get it home from Barrels. I wiſh both your circumſtances and mine would allow of an utter *inattention* to them; and then, I believe, our natural indolence would be a kind of match for our ambition. I ſhall probably enlarge my acquaintance this year; but what *doth* it? the circle of my friends with whom I can be *eaſy*, and *amuſed* much, will continue ſmall as ever. I could dwell a good deal upon this ſubject; but I have only

room to desire you would give me your opinion how I should inscribe my urn to Mr. Somervile. "Author of the Chace" cannot be tolerably expressed in Latin without a circumlocution. I aim at brevity, and would therefore omit it. Pray read over the specimens I have thrown together, and *oblige* me with a speedy answer, if it extend to nothing else besides yours and Mrs. Jago's health, which I ought at this time more particularly to enquire after. I am,

Your most affectionate,

and faithful friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

LIX. To the same.

Dear Sir, June 11, 1750.

I ACKNOWLEDGE myself obliged to you for procuring me the pictures. I received them both very safe, as I have a pretty strong assurance I *shall* do most articles of which my servant Tom has the care.—He has punctuality and management to *atone* for his *imperfections.*

tions. He brought me theſe paper-ſculled buſts from Wroxall entirely unhurt, contrary to the expectation of all that ſaw them; after which, he might undertake for almoſt any thing.—The portrait is undoubtedly a good one. I ſhewed it to Mr. Smart (who is a painter himſelf, though a clergyman), and he allowed as much; added alſo, that it had ſomething of Sir Godfrey Kneller, as well as of Sir Peter Lely.—The flower-piece is very good, ſo far as relates to the flowers; the dog and parrot abominable, and the grapes very exceptionable. I never conſidered the two flower-pieces at Icheneton with attention enough to cauſe a preference; having never any thoughts that *either* would fall to my ſhare. I ſhall add nothing with regard to your choice; but that I ſincerely *hope* yours is the better piece. I never heard of Caſteels, I own; nor can I find his name in any of my accounts of the painters, though they take in pretty modern ones: but I can ſay this for your comfort, that if he excelled in any thing, it was probably in flowers; for I ſee his name at the bottom of thoſe flower-pieces that I have in water colours, as the deſigner of them; and I think the deſigns are good. Though I could wiſh neither the Cupid nor the fruit-piece had eſcaped us, yet is there no blame to be laid at your door;

at

at leaſt ſuppoſing that you are endowed with nothing more than rational conjecture, and that you are not gifted with propheſy.

And now, having ſpoken, I think, to *moſt* parts of your letter, I proceed to ſay a word or two in the way of appendix. Firſt then, after five or ſix weeks work of maſons and carpenters, I plainly diſcover that my houſe is an unfiniſhable thing;—and yet, I perſuade myſelf, there will never be wanting a room in it, where you may ſpend an agreeable day with your undoubted friend.—Did I ever tell you how *unſeaſonably* the three fiddles ſtruck up in my grove about an hour after you left me; and how a ſet of ten bells was heard from my wood the evening after? It might have paſſed for the harmony of ſome aërial ſpirit, who was a well-wiſher to us poor mortals; but that I think, had it been ſo, it would have been addreſſed to the *better ſort*, and of conſequence have been heard whilſt *you* were *here*. This by way of introduction to what I am going to tell you. Mr. Pixell has made an agreement with his club at Birmingham, to give me a day's muſic in ſome part of my walks. The time is not yet fixed; but, if you were an idle man, and could be brought over at a day or two's notice,

I would

I would give it you, and be in hopes I could entertain you very agreeably.

You cannot think how much you gratified my vanity when you were here, by saying, that if this place were yours, you thought you should be less able to keep within the bounds of *œconomy* than myself.—God knows, it is pain and grief to me to observe her rules at *all*; and *rigidly* I never can.—How is it possible to possess improveable scenes, and not wish to improve them? and how is it possible, with œconomy, to be at the expence of improving them upon my fortune? To be continually in fear of excess in perfecting every trifling design, how irksome! to be restrained from attempting *any*, how vexatious! so that I never can enjoy my situation — that is certain. — Oeconomy, that invidious old matron! on occasion of every frivolous expence, makes such a hellish squalling, that the murmur of a cascade is utterly lost to me.—Often do I cry out with Cowley,

" O rivers! brooks! when, when in *you*, shall I
" Myself, eas'd of *un-peaceful* thoughts, espy!
" O woods and groves! when, when shall I be
" made
" The happy tenant of your shade!"

PAPER

PAPER fails: abruptly therefore, but sincerely and affectionately

I am, dear Sir,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LX. To C—— W——, Esq.

Dear Sir, The Leasows, Sept. 9, 1750.

PRAY, is laziness an excuse for not writing? Tell me.—However, if it be so, I am afraid I shall want an excuse for laziness, like the philosopher, who, supposing the world might rest upon a tortoise's back, found himself no less embarrassed for a pedestal to support his tortoise. I have, indeed, been pretty busy at home, in raising a pool-dam, and have interchanged a few visits with such of my acquaintance as live within three miles.—What then?—I abominate all excuses that are grounded upon the business or amusements of an idle man.—As if such a person's time was so wholly

filled up, that he could not find half an hour to write a line to his friend. It is beſt to acknowledge lazineſs at firſt, and that there are particular intervals, when one is much leſs diſpoſed to write even a few lines, than at others. And then, as to lazineſs, one has nothing to do but to plead human frailty; which, if a perſon has not too many frailties beſides, may perhaps be indulged him. However, "Veniam peti-"muſque, damuſque," will not fail to weigh with every good-natured man. The chief dealing I have with Harris the Jew is, for the intelligence which he brings me concerning you and Mrs. W—; but it ſeldom amounts to much more than that you are well, and in your garden.

He is an Ebrew Jew, or he would tell me you had purchaſed a couple of genteel horſes, or a chaiſe and pair, and were coming over to The Leaſows to ſpend a week with me.

Nevertheless, I hope to ſee you ſoon; but *en paſſant* I aſſure you, I ſhall go in about a month to Mr. Jago's, and from thence to Mr. Miller's; who, I believe I told you, was here, with Mr. Lyttelton, Lady Ayleſbury, Colonel Conway, &c. I think I never anſwered your quere concerning Colonel Lyttelton.—He is the ſame perſon

perſon that you remember, and your propheſy concerning him has been literally accompliſhed. He is a man of courage, genius, generoſity, and politeneſs; has been fortunate in the world; was made a Colonel at about ſix and twenty; diſtinguiſhed himſelf in ſeveral campaigns; married the Dutcheſs of Bridgewater; and had the other day about ſixteen thouſand pounds left him by Colonel Jefferies, a very diſtant relation. He has a ſeat, and ſpeaks in the Houſe of Commons, has bought a town and country-houſe; the latter of which he is ornamenting in the modern way. His Dutcheſs the moſt unceremonious even-tempered woman that lives.—So enjoy the ſpirit of propheſy, and exert it again.—It needs little more than good ſenſe.—Which of the hiſtorians is it, that foretold in his hiſtory a very remarkable ſeries of events, by dint of this alone, and which were all accompliſhed? Let me know what you are doing now. Have you repaired the farm-houſe you talked of?—and have you remembered to make the man a couple of good large niches in his chimney corner, where he, and his family, may ſpend a more comfortable evening than was ever ſpent by any firſt miniſter in Chriſtendom;—perhaps alſo converſe more to the purpoſe. You tell me nothing of your Mr. Jago, Seignior Benedict, the new married man. Tell him to leave his wife and

family for a day or two, saddle his mule, and come over to The Leasows.—Tell him, all pleasures are heightened by a little discontinuance.—Tell him, did I say? how can you for shame advise him so contrarily to your own practice?

Believe me, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXI. To C—— W——, Esq.

Dear Sir, The Leasows, Nov. 2, 1750.

IT never can be that I owe you for three letters; as to two, I will agree with you; one that I received together with my books, and the other soon after; but that I am indebted for more than these—

"Credat Judæus Apella,
"Non ego."

Even that same "Judæus Apella," who affords me this very opportunity of sending my compliments

pliments to you and Mrs. W—, and of assuring you, that if I had not purposed to have seen you, I had wrote to you long ago.

MASTER Harris talks very respectfully of your garden; and we have no dispute, save only in one point. He says, that you labour very hard in your vocation; whereas, I am not willing to allow that all the work you ever did, or will do in it, is worth a single bunch of radishes. However, I dare not contradict him too much, because he waits for my letter.

—How happy are you, that can hold up your spade, and cry, "Avaunt, Satan!" when a toyman offers you his deceitful vanities! Do not you rejoice inwardly, and pride yourself greatly in your own philosophy?

"'Twas thus—
"The wise Athenian cross'd a glitt'ring fair:
"Unmov'd by tongues and sights he walk'd the
"place,
"Thro' tape, tags, tinsel, gimp, perfume, and
"lace,
"Then bends from Mars's Hill his awful eyes,
"And, "What a world I never want!" he cries."

PARNEL.

Mean time, do not deſpiſe others that can find any needful amuſement in what, I think, Bunyan very aptly calls *Vanity Fair*. I have been at it many times this ſeaſon, and have bought many kinds of merchandize there. It is a part of philoſophy, to adapt one's paſſions to one's way of life; and the ſolitary, unſocial ſphere in which I move makes me think it happy that I can retain a reliſh for ſuch trifles as I can draw into it. Mean time, I dare not reaſon too much upon this head. Reaſon, like the famous concave mirrour at Paris, would, in two minutes, vitrify all the Jew's pack: I mean, that it would immediately deſtroy all the form, colour, and beauty, of every thing that is not merely uſeful.—But I ramble too far, and you do not want ſuch ſpeculations. My intent, when I ſat down, was to tell you, that I ſhall probably ſee you very ſoon, and certainly remain in the mean time, and at all times, Sir,

Your obliged,

and very faithful ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXII. To

LXII. To a Friend, on various Subjects.

Dear Mr. ——, 1750.

WITH the utmoſt gratitude for the obſervations which you ſent me, and with the higheſt opinion of their propriety in general, do I ſit down to anſwer your obliging letter. You will not take it amiſs, I know, if I ſcribble broken hints, and trace out little ſketches of my mind, juſt as I ſhould go near to explain it if I were upon the ſpot, as often as I think of you, which I beg leave to aſſure you happens many times in a day. They ſay, "A word to the wiſe is enough;" a word, therefore, to a friend of underſtanding may be ſuppoſed to be ſomething more than enough, becauſe it is probable he is acquainted with three parts of one's mind before. — The cenſure you have paſſed upon Milton's Lycidas, ſo far as it regards the metre which he has choſen, is unexceptionably juſt; and one would imagine, if that argument concerning the diſtance of the rhimes were preſſed home in a public eſſay, it ſhould be ſufficient to extirpate that kind of verſe for ever. As to my opinion concerning the choice of Engliſh metre, I dare not touch upon the ſub-

ject, and I will give you my reason: I began upon it in a letter which I intended for you about a month ago; and I soon found that I had filled a sheet of paper with my dissertation, and left no room for other things which I had more mind to communicate. Beside, I found it so blotted that I did not chuse to send it; and as the subject is so extremely copious, I shall decline it entirely, till *talking* may prove as effectual as *writing*.—As to your advice, with regard to my publications, I believe it to be just, and shall, in all probability, pursue it.—I am afraid, by your account, that Dodsley has published my name to the School-mistress. I was a good deal displeased at his publishing that poem without my knowledge, when he had so many opportunities of giving me some previous information; but, as he would probably disregard my resentment, I chose to stifle it, and wrote to him directly upon the receipt of yours, that I would be glad to furnish him with an improved copy of the School-mistress, &c. for his second edition. He accepts it with some complaisance, desires it soon; and I am at a fault to have the opinion of my friends, what alterations or additions it will be proper to insert. I have scribbled a copy, which I send this day to Mr. Graves and Mr. Whistler; but I am greatly fearful I shall not

receive

receive their criticiſms time enough, and I ſhall have the ſame longing for yours. A journey to Whitchurch, which I have long propoſed, might unite all theſe advantages; and I heartily wiſh I may be able to effect it without inconvenience. If I go thither, I call on you.

I am,

ever and entirely yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXIII. To the ſame.

The Leaſows,
Mar. 28, 1751.

Dear Sir,

WHAT a ſtupid fool was I, to ſhew you thoſe letters of my friend Graves, wherein he declares himſelf ſo freely againſt a regular correſpondence! ſee the effects of it! You have taken immediate advantage of his example, and I muſt never more expect an anſwer to any letter that I ſend you, in leſs than half a century. I wrote to you after I came home, to thank you for all your kindneſs at

I——,

I——, &c. but not a syllable have I been able to receive from you, or a word that I could hear concerning you. I could, however, very easily convince you, that Mr. Graves (your precedent) is not altogether so hardened an offender as you may imagine. His last letter is a very affectionate recantation. I inclose that part of it which regards Mr F—.

WHAT a number of schemes are irreparably broken by the sudden death of the Prince of Wales! Yours, my good friend, which seems to be destroyed amongst the rest, has, I think, of late given you no solicitude. Your interest in Mr. N— will remain the same, I suppose; and if he would but serve you nearer *home*, I will have no sort of quarrel with him that he did not transplant you into Cornwall.—It is at least some gratification to a person's self-love, when one finds the more *ambitious* hopes of more *aspiring* people as liable to be suddenly extinguished as one's own. However, the death of the Prince gave me a good deal of concern, though it no way affected my *particular* interest, as he had all the humane, affable, and generous qualities, which could recommend him to one's *affection*.

MR.

Mr. Graves has ſent me two copies of verſes. One on Medals, to Mr. Walker; and the other, on the late Memoirs of the London Heroines, Lady V—, Mrs. Pilkington, and Mrs. Phillips. Both good in their way, which you ſhall ſee when you come over.

Have you ſeen the firſt books of the Scribleriad, by Mr. Cambridge?—The Verſes written in a Country Church-yard?—Mr. W. Whitehead's Ode to the Nymph of Briſtol Spring?—or, what *have* you ſeen?—You live infinitely more in the world than I do; who hear nothing, ſee nothing, do nothing, and *am* nothing. Remedy this unhappineſs, by ſending me ſomewhat that may rouſe my attention.—I muſt except what I hear from my Lady Luxborough, who indulges me now and then with a letter in French.

If you ſhould think this letter more than uſually *dull*, you muſt know, that, ſince I ſaw you, I have been *generally* diſpirited; till about a fortnight ago I found ſome nervous diſorders that I greatly diſliked, and upon examination was told I had a nervous fever. For this I have been taking ſaline draughts and bolus's, and *hope* I am ſomething better; though I am far from

from well. I would not indeed have written to you at this time, but I choſe not to defer ſending the incloſed poſtſcript.—You, who have ſhared many of my *happieſt* hours, will excuſe the produce of a more than ordinarily dull one.

Mrs. Arnold comes up to enquire after my health, and wiſhes I may get better, that I may ſtir out and ſee the *pretty creatures in the barn*. It ſeems, ſhe has a cow or two that have calved ſince I kept my room.

Why ſhould I prolong a letter that has no kind of chance to afford you any amuſement? Make my compliments to Mrs. —, and believe me to be ever moſt affectionately

Yours,

W. Shenstone.

I have juſt taken and ſigned a leaſe for life of the terrace beyond my wood, for which I am to pay annually the ſum of one ſhilling.—Am not I a man of great worldly importance, to purchaſe ground and take leaſes thus?—What matters it whether the articles that *ſecure* the premiſes to me, would alſo *cover* them or not?

My ſervice to Mr. F—t;—why will he not come and ſpend a week with me?—I think you cannot both be abſent at a time.

LXIV. To Mr. Graves.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 16, 1750-1.

SINCE I received your letter, I have been a week at W—. I believe I may have told you, that I never was fond of that place. There is too much trivial elegance, too much punctilio for me; and perhaps, as you expreſs it, too much *ſpeculation*. But I was fearful I might entirely loſe Mr. Whiſtler's acquaintance, if I did not make an effort once in five years to return his viſit. Beſides, I ſhould have had no hopes of ſeeing him at The Leaſows hereafter; and I am extremely deſirous of ſeeing both *him* and *you* here, having made many alterations which I do not undertake but with an eye to the approbation of my more ingenious friends; but he ſeems, to my great ſurprize, to renounce the thing called *taſte* in buildings, gardens, &c. is grown weary of his own little embelliſhments

at

at W—, and longs to ſettle in London for the greater part of his time. This, I believe, he would put in execution immediately; but that he thinks it might give ſome uneaſineſs to his mother, if he ſhould quit the houſe that ſhe with ſo much difficulty obtained for him. *I* too am ſick of the word *taſte*; but I think the *thing* itſelf the only proper *ambition*, and the *ſpecific pleaſure* of all who have any ſhare in the faculty of imagination. I need not mention my reaſons; you will ſoon conceive them. And, however the caſe be, there is one branch of it which ſo totally engroſſes the perſons with whom I principally converſe, that I was aſtoniſhed to hear him ſpeak even with indifference concerning the reigning taſte for rural decorations. I could ill forbear telling Mr. Whiſtler, that he was now *literally* a beau in a band-box; but the freedom might have given more offence than the joke was worth. He has improved the place extremely; but I do not like his colonnades. You know, nothing of that kind is tolerable, unleſs regularly executed in ſtone: that is one thing. Another is, that colonnades are ornaments which will not *bear* to be very *diminutive*. Mr.— (whoſe houſe only I ſaw) has been at the expence of a large cornice round it, in moſt elaborate brick-work; but with regard to his

ſtucco-work

ſtucco-work *within* doors, he is quite *extravagant*.—I mention theſe things upon a ſuppoſition that you may like to hear *any* thing that regards the place; but indeed they are ſo mighty trifling, that I ought to doubt my ſuppoſition. I ſupped with Mr. P—'s family once at Mr. W—'s, and once at Mr. W—'s, and all was mighty well; only I happen to have a violent averſion to card-playing, and at W— I think they do nothing *elſe*. So that, on account of my ignorance at quadrille, or any creditable game, I was forced to loſe my money, and two evenings out of my ſeven, at Pope Joan with Mr. P—'s children. Mr. W—, to make me amends, invited me to breakfaſt, and ſhewed me your verſes. I aſſure you, you have no occaſion for a better advocate than Mr. W—; whether with regard to his *judgement*, or his zeal in behalf of the ſubject, the verſes, or the poet. I would fain have obtained a copy; but he did not care to give one without your commiſſion. I hope *you* will oblige me ſo far. I like them very much; the ſubject is genteel, and the verſes eaſy and elegant. We agreed upon one or two different readings; and one ſtanza that concerns cards ſhould, I think, be corrected. Not that I would have you leſs ſevere upon cards neither; I was even glad to find, that you gave

them

them so little quarter. I sometimes thought that Mr. W—'s seeming fondness for them was a kind of *contre-cœur*.—Be that as it will, his objection to the stanza, as well as mine, was solely founded on the versification, not the sentiment. I liked his Latin verses; but they do not interfere with yours. Send me a copy, and confine my use of it by what limitations you please. My reigning toy at present is a pocket-book; and I glory as much in furnishing it with the verses of my acquaintance, as others would with bank-bills. I did not know when I went to W—, but I might have heard Mrs. G— *accused of certain questions touching their law* (I mean of forms and ceremonies); but I did *not*. On the contrary, I had the satisfaction of hearing her person, her temper, and her understanding, much commended; but this I did not want. The delicacy of your taste is equal with me to a thousand commendations. Mrs. W— is really so much altered by her indisposition, that I did not know her. She talks of going to Bath this season.—I talked of it too, and wish it of all earthly things. You must know, I could not have come to Claverton *instead* of going to W—, as I did not determine on the expedition at home; but at a friend's house, where I was betwixt twenty and thirty miles on my way thither.

ther. Beſides, I would allow myſelf more time when I turn my face towards Bath, than I could this winter. Your invitation, as it is very obliging, ſo it has many concurring circumſtances to recommend it at this time. I want to recover my health, which muſt be recovered by Bath, or *nothing*. I want to have you read ſome trifles of mine, which muſt be ratified by you, or *no one*; but principally, and above all, do I long to ſee you, my old friend, and Mrs. G—, whom I expect you ſhould render my new one.—I am obliged for your charitable endeavours to ſupport my ſpirits. Your company would do it effectually, but ſcarce any thing leſs, in *winter*. Solitary life, limited circumſtances, a phlegmatic habit, and diſagreeable events, have given me a melancholy turn, that is hardly diſſipated by the moſt ſerene ſky; but in a north-eaſt wind is quite intolerable. After a long ſtate of this kind, upon every acceſs of amuſement, one is apt to think it is not *right* to be happy; that it is one of Wollaſton's implicit lyes; a treating things contrary to what they *deſerve*.—Your ſituation at Claverton is admired by moſt people; and, if you could connect ſome little matter in the neighbourhood, would be as ſurely envied.

It is now high time to releaſe you.—This is not a letter, but an olio. I deſire my compliments to Mrs. G—, and am affectionately and invariably

Yours,

W. Shenstone.

As I muſt now uſe a frank, I will ſend you a few inſcriptions: your imagination will ſupply the ſcenery, on which, what merit they may have, depends. There *were* different readings in the firſt copy, of which I beg your opinion.

Stanza the firſt.

" At leaſt this calm ſequeſter'd ſhade
" Ambition never dares invade
" No, &c.
" But ſhuns, &c."

Stanza the ſecond.

" Hither the plaintive *halcyon hies*,
" Avoiding all the race that flies."

My deſign was only to convey ſome pleaſing ideas of things, which, though proper to the place,

place, a perſon might not chance to ſee there once in twenty times. Mr. Lyttelton and Lady Aylesbury *neceſſitated* me to give them copies, though they probably did it out of complaiſance only: I gave them in the manner I ſend them you. I hope *you* have not entirely dropt your love for rural ſcenes, of which you were once ſo fond. I will allow your taſte for medals to preponderate.—I beg, dear Sir, you would neglect no *opportunity* of calling on me.—I will come to Claverton when I can.

LXV. To a Friend.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. G—, Sept. 17, 1751.

I AM very ſenſibly obliged to you for the *diligence* and *expedition* which you have ſhewn in anſwering my late requeſt: I cannot feel the very *tenderneſs* of friendſhip to be at all abated in me by our long ſeparation; nor will it at any time be poſſible I ſhould, ſo long as I receive ſuch teſtimonies of your uſual *kindneſs* and *ingenuity*.—I have no ſort of exceptions to make againſt the province in which you were engaged at Cheltenham, nor the light in which

you appeared. What you loſt in any one's opinion of your independency, you would gain in their idea of your merit, genius, and learning; and then you had all thoſe advantages *par deſſu*.—As to the compliments that were paid to Mrs. G—, you have ſomething of the ſame ſort of reaſon to be pleaſed with them, that I have to be pleaſed with thoſe that are given to my place; which I conſider as naturally poſſeſſed of many beauties, each of them brought to light, and perfected through my own diſcernment, care, and cultivation. And then, your pleaſure ought to be ſo much greater than mine, as you have a nobler ſubject to enjoy.—Mrs. G— has too much ſenſe to object againſt the freedom of this ſimilitude.

I CANNOT help adding a few ſtrokes to your picture of Mrs. —. I think her an extremely *ſuperficial* female-pedant: for after an interval of many years ſince I firſt converſed with her at Mr. ——'s, I found her converſation turn ſolely upon the ſame *topics*, *definitions*, and *quotations*. I believe, I could eaſily enough have recommended myſelf to a greater degree of her favour; but her vanity and affectations were beyond what I could bear.—Your account of —— is very pictureſque, and agreeable to the idea I always had

had of him; but I believe that idea was perfected by what obſervations I made when I had ſome of his company at London.—There was ſomething accountable enough to me in their burleſquing Mr. L—'s monody. He is, you know, engaged in a party; and his poem (though an extraordinary fine compoſition) was too tender for the public ear. It ſhould have been printed privately, and a number of copies diſperſed only among their friends and acquaintance;—but even ſo it would have been republiſhed; and it was too good to ſuppreſs. I wiſh the burleſquers of ſuch *ingenuous* profuſions could be puniſhed, conſiſtently with Engliſh liberty. "Where were ye, Muſes, &c." is imitated from Milton, and taken by Milton from Theocritus. I write Greek wretchedly; but you will remember the paſſage,

Πᾶ ποκ' ἄρ' ἦθ' ὄκα Δάφνις ἐτάκετο; πᾶ ποκα, Νύμφαι;

I HEARD, once before, it was burleſqued under the title of "An Elegy on the Death of "a favourite Cat;" but the burleſque will die, and the poem will ſurvive.—You tell me, "The "Author of Peregrine Pickle ſays, if you will "flatter Mr. Lyttelton well, he will at laſt make

"you a Middlesex Justice;" and it happened oddly that, whilst I was reading your letter, a neighbour told me, I was put in the commission of the peace. I have never received a single line from Mr. Whistler, and I believe my journey to W— has given the final blow to our friendship. Pray was not Mr. Blandy some relation of theirs, or only their attorney? The affair is uncommonly shocking; and I fancy the *genuine* accounts that Mr. W— sends you will be curious anecdotes at Bath.—I suppose you have painted your room with oil colours, and made it *really* handsome.—I drew out a festoon and a medal some time ago, for a pannel over Mr. P—'s chimney; but they knew not what to make of the medal, and had only the festoon executed in stone colour, by a common painter; —yours is better, and in character.—I am a degree more frugal than you; for I only use quick lime, and either blue or yellow sand to take away the objection which I have to whited walls.

I PAID a visit to Mr. Lyttelton, the Dean, &c. since he came down; but had little of their company, for they thought Sir Thomas was dying: however, by unparalleled strength of constitution, he lingered in violent pain till last Saturday, when he

he died, very much lamented. He had good natural parts, well improved by reading modern writers, and by the knowledge of the world: extremely prudent, conſiderate, humane, polite, and charitable.—I have jumbled his more obvious qualities together, that you may not think I am uſurping the province of a news-man. Sir George will loſe no time in building a new houſe, or doing what is more than *equivalent* to the old one.

I WANT no *temptation* to come immediately to C—. This is a melancholy *ſeaſon* with me always; whether it be owing to the ſcenes I ſee, or to the effect of hazy ſkies upon an ill-perſpiring ſkin.—I can ſay no more at *preſent*, than that I moſt ardently deſire to ſee you, and deſire my humble ſervice to Mrs. G—. I have a chalybeat ſpring in the middle of my grotto: what think you of this inſcription?

" FONS FERRVGINEVS
" DIVARVM OPTVMAE
" SALVTI SACER."

Is it antique?

I am, dear Mr. G—,

Your moſt affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

LXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on the Death of Mr. SHENSTONE'S Brother.

The Leasows,
Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 14, 1752.

YOU will be amazed at my long silence; and it might reasonably excite some disgust if my days had passed of late in the manner they used to do: but I am not the man I was; perhaps I never *shall* be. Alas! my dearest friend! I have lost my only brother! and, since the fatal close of November, I have had neither peace nor respite from agonizing thoughts!

You, I think, have *seen* my brother; but perhaps had no opportunity of distinguishing him from the groupe of others, whom we call *good-natured* men. This part of his character was so visible in his countenance, that he was generally beloved at sight; *I*, who must be allowed to know him, do assure you, that his understanding was no way inferior to his benevolence. He had not only a sound judgement, but a lively wit and genuine humour. As these were many times eclipsed by his native bashfulness, so his benevolence only suffered by being

shewn

ſhewn to an exceſs. I here mean his giving too indiſcriminately into thoſe jovial meetings of company, where the warmth of a ſocial temper is diſcovered with leaſt reſerve; but the virtues of his head and heart would ſoon have ſhone without alloy. The foibles of his youth were wearing off; and his affection for me and regard to my advice, with his own good ſenſe, would ſoon have rendered him all that I could have wiſhed in a ſucceſſor. I never in my life knew a perſon more ſincere in the expreſſion of his love or diſlike. But it was the *former* that ſuited the propenſity of his heart; the *latter* was as tranſient as the ſtarts of paſſion that occaſioned it. In ſhort, with much true genius and real fortitude, he was, according to the *Engliſh* acceptation, "a truly honeſt man;" and I think I may alſo add, a truly Engliſh character; but "habeo, dixi? immo *habui* fratrem "& amicum, Chreme!" All this have I *loſt* in him. He is now in regard to *this* world no more than a mere idea. And this idea, therefore, though deeply tinged with melancholy, I muſt, and ſurely *ought* to, cheriſh and preſerve.

I BELIEVE I wrote you ſome account of his illneſs laſt ſpring; from which to all appearance he

he was tolerably well recovered. He took the air, and visited about with me, during the warmer months of summer; but my pleasure was of short duration. "Hæsit lateri lethalis "arundo!" The peripneumony under which he laboured in the spring had terminated in an adhesion of the lungs to the pleura, so that he could never lie but upon his right side; and this, as the weather grew colder, occasioned an obstruction that could never be surmounted.

THOUGH my reason forewarned me of the event, I was not the more prepared for it.—Let me not dwell upon it.—It is altogether insupportable in *every respect*; and my imagination seems more assiduous in educing pain from this occasion, than I ever yet found it in administering to my pleasure.—This hurts me to no purpose—I know it; and yet, when I have avocated my thoughts, and fixed them for a while upon common amusements, I suffer the same sort of consciousness as if I were guilty of a crime. Believe me, this has been the most sensible affliction I ever felt in my life; and you, who know my anxiety when I had far less reason to complain, will more easily *conceive* it now, than I am able to describe it.

I CANNOT

I CANNOT pretend to fill up my paper with my usual subjects.—I should thank you for your remarks upon my poetry; but I despise poetry: and I might tell you of all my little rural improvements; but I hate them.—What can I now expect from my solitary rambles through them, but a series of melancholy reflections and irksome anticipations?—Even the pleasure I should take in shewing them to *you*, the greatest they can afford me, must be now greatly inferior to what it might formerly have been.

How have I prostituted my sorrow on occasions that little concerned me! I am ashamed to think of that idle "Elegy upon Autumn," when I have so much more important cause to hate and to condemn it *now*; but the glare and gaiety of the Spring is what I *principally* dread; when I shall find all things restored but my poor brother, and something like those lines of Milton will run for ever in my thoughts:

"Thus, with the year,
"*Seasons* return; but not to *me* returns
"A brother's cordial smile, at eve or morn."

I shall

I ſhall then ſeem to wake from amuſements, company; every *ſort* of inebriation with which I have been endeavouring to lull my grief aſleep, as from a dream; and I ſhall feel as if I were, *that inſtant*, deſpoiled of all I have chiefly valued for thirty years together; of all my preſent happineſs, and all my future proſpects. The melody of birds, which he no more muſt hear; the chearful beams of the ſun, of which he no more muſt partake; *every* wonted pleaſure will produce that *ſort* of pain to which my temper is moſt obnoxious. Do not conſider this as poetry.—Poetry on ſuch occaſions is no more than literal truth. In the preſent caſe it is *leſs*; for half the tenderneſs I feel is altogether ſhapeleſs and inexpreſſible.

After all, the wiſdom of the world may perhaps eſteem me a gainer. Ill do they judge of this event, who think that any ſhadow of amends can be made for the death of a brother, and the diſappointment of all my ſchemes, by the acceſſion of ſome fortune, which I never can enjoy!

This is a mournful narrative: I will not, therefore, enlarge it.—Amongſt all changes

and

and chances, I often think of you; and pray there may be no ſuſpicion or jealouſy betwixt us during the reſt of our lives.

I am, dear Sir,

moſt affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXVII. To C— W—, Eſq.

ALAS! dear Mr. W—! the terrible event has happened! I have loſt the beſt of brothers; and you are to pity, not to condemn, your unfortunate correſpondent.

ABOUT the middle of November I had prepared a letter for you, which lies now amongſt my papers. At that time, amidſt all my apprehenſions, I had ſome hopes to ſupport me; but before I could ſend it, my ſituation was greatly altered, and the month did not wholly

wholly expire, till it had effectually rendered me the moſt wretched of mankind.

THUS much it was neceſſary I ſhould tell you; you will pardon me, if I do not deſcend any farther into an account of merit that is loſt, and of ſorrow which is too apt to revive of itſelf. Be aſſured, it is to me a loſs which the whole world cannot compenſate; and an affliction which the longeſt time I can live will not be able to eraſe.

YOU ſaid, you would let Maſter W— come and ſpend a few days with me.—I beſeech you do.—It will be ſome relief to me; and, God knows, I have occaſion enough for every aſſiſtance than can be drawn from correſpondence, company, or amuſement.

YOU, Sir, I preſume, proceed in the innocent recreations of your garden, and thoſe may at leaſt prove a balance for any ſmall diſquiets that attend you. If greater ills befal you, you have perſons near you to alleviate them.—A wife, family, viſitants, male and female friends in abundance, and a table ſufficiently hoſpitable to attract even your enemies. With me the caſe is otherwiſe. What I have undergone this

this winter, may you never feel ſo much as in apprehenſion!

Believe me, my friend,

affectionately and invariably yours,

IX Kal. March,
MDCCLII. W. SHENSTONE.

LXVIII. To the ſame.

Dear Mr. W—, July 22, 1752.

I DO not know why I made you a promiſe of a pretty long letter. What I now write will be but a moderate one, both in regard to length and ſtile; yet write I muſt, *par maniere d'acquit*, and you have brought four-pence expence upon yourſelf for a parcel of nonſenſe, and to no manner of purpoſe. This is not tautology, you muſt obſerve; for nonſenſe ſometimes anſwers very conſiderable purpoſes.—In love, it is eloquence itſelf.—In friendſhip, therefore, by all the rules of ſound logic, you muſt allow it to be ſomething; what I cannot ſay, "nequeo monſtrare, & ſentio tantum." The principal

principal part of a correſpondence betwixt two idle men conſiſts in two important enquiries—what we do, and how we do; but as all perſons ought to give ſatisfaction before they expect to receive it, I am to tell you in the firſt place, that my own health is tolerably good, or rather what I muſt call good, being, I think, much better that it has been this laſt half year.—Then as touching my occupation, alas! "Othello's occupation's gone!" I neither read nor write aught beſides a few letters; and I give myſelf up entirely to ſcenes of diſſipation; lounge at my Lord Dudley's for near a week together; make dinners; accept of invitations; ſit up till three o'clock in the morning with young ſprightly married women, over white port and *vin de payſans*; ramble over my fields; iſſue out orders to my hay-makers; foretel rain and fair weather; enjoy the fragance of hay, the cocks, and the wind-rows; admire that univerſal lawn, which is produced by the ſcythe; ſometimes inſpect, and draw mouldings for my carpenters; ſometimes paper my walls, and at other times my cielings; do every ſocial office that falls in my way, but never ſeek out for any.

"SED

"SED vos quid tandem? quæ circumvolitas "agilis thyma? non tu corpus eras ſine pectore. "Non tibi parvum ingenium, non incultum "eſt!" In ſhort, what do you? and how do you do?—that is all.

TELL my young pupil, your ſon, he muſt by all manner of means ſend me a Latin letter: and if he have any billet in French, for Miſs Lea at The Grange, or even in Hebrew, Coptic, or Syriac, I will engage it ſhall be received very graciouſly. Thither am I going to dinner this day, and there "implebor veteris "Bacchi, pinguiſque ferinæ."

ALL this looks like extreme jollity; but is this the true ſtate of the caſe, or may I not more properly apply the

"Spem vultu ſimulat, premit atrum corde "dolorem?"

ACCEPT this ſcrawl in place of a letter, and believe me

Ever moſt affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXIX. To Mr. G—, on the Receipt of his Picture.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. G—, Oct. 3, 1752.

I AM very unfeignedly aſhamed to reflect how long it is ſince I received your preſent, and how much longer it is ſince I received your letter. I have been reſolving to write to you almoſt daily ever ſince you left me; yet have fooliſhly enough permitted avocations (of infinitely leſs importance than your correſpondence) to interfere with my gratitude, my intereſt, and my inclination. What apology I have to make, though no way adequate to my negligence, is in ſhort as follows. After the receipt of your letter, I deferred writing till I could ſpeak of the arrival of your picture.—This did not happen till about a month or five weeks ago, when I was embarraſſed with maſons, carvers, carpenters, and company, all at a time. And though it were idle enough to ſay, that I could not find *one* vacant hour for my purpoſe, yet in truth my head was ſo confuſed by theſe multifarious diſtractions, that I could have written nothing ſatisfactory either to *myſelf* or *you*: nothing

nothing worth a ſingle *penny*, ſuppoſing the poſtage were to coſt you no more. The workmen had not *finiſhed my rooms* a minute, when Lady Luxborough, Mrs. Davies, and Mr. Outing arrived, with *five* ſervants and a *ſet* of horſes, to ſtay with me for ſome time. After a nine days viſit, I returned with them to Barrels, where I continued for a week; and whither (by the way) I go again with Lord Dudley in about a fortnight's time. Other company filled up the interſtices of my ſummer; and I hope my dear friend will accept of this apology for ſo long a chaſm of ſilence, during which I have been uniformly at his ſervice, and true to that inviolable friendſhip I ſhall ever bear him.

I PROCEED now to thank you for the *diſtinction* you ſhew me, in ſending me your picture: I do it very ſincerely. It is aſſuredly a ſtrong likeneſs, as my Lady Luxborough with all her ſervants that have *ſeen you* pronounce, as well as I; conſequently more valuable to a *friend* than a face he does not know, though it were one of Raphael's. The ſmile about the mouth is bad; as it agrees but ill with the gravity of the eyes; and as a ſmile, ever ſo little *outré*, has a bad effect in a picture where it is *conſtant*,

though it may be ever so graceful in a person where it is *transitory*. However, this may be altered, when I can meet with a good painter. I have no *other* objection, but to the prominence of the belly. The hair, I think, is good; and the coat and band no way exceptionable. I have given it all the advantage I can: it has a good light, and makes part of an elegant chimney-piece in a genteel, though little breakfast-room, at the end of my house.

Mr. Whistler and I are now upon good terms, and two or three friendly letters have been interchanged betwixt us. He presses me to come to Whitchurch; and I *him* to come over to The Leasows; but the winter cometh, when no man can visit.—The dispute is adjusted by *time*, whilst we are urging it by *expostulation*.—No uncommon event in most sublunary projects!

Lady Luxborough said very extraordinary things in praise of Mrs. G—, after you left us at Barrels; yet I sincerely believe no more than she deserves. I took the liberty of shewing her your letter here, as it included a compliment to her, which I thought particularly genteel.—She will always consider you as a person of genius, and her friend.

During

DURING moſt of this ſummer (wherein I have ſeen much company either here or at Lord Dudley's), I have been almoſt conſtantly engaged in one continued ſcene of *jollity*. I endeavoured to find *relief* from ſuch ſort of diſſipation; and, when I had once given in to it, I was obliged to proceed; as, they ſay, is the caſe when perſons diſguiſe their face with paint. *Mine* was a ſort of *painting* applied to my temper. "Spem vultu ſimulare, premere atrum "corde dolorem." And the moment I left it off, my ſoul appeared again all haggard and forlorn. My company has now deſerted me; the ſpleen-fogs begin to riſe; and the *terrible* incidents of laſt winter revive apace in my memory. This is my ſtate of mind, while I write you theſe few lines; yet, I thank God, my health is not much amiſs.

I DID not forget my promiſe of a box, &c. to Mrs. G—. I had a dozen ſent me, one or two of which I could have liked, had they been better *finiſhed*. They were of a good oval, white enamel, with flowers, &c. but horribly gilt, and not accurately painted. I beg my beſt ſervice to her, and will make a freſh eſſay. My deareſt friend, accept this awkward letter

for the present.—In a few posts, I will write again.—Believe me yours from the bottom of my soul.

W. SHENSTONE.

I will send you a label for made-wine, after my own plan. It is enamel, with grapes, shepherd's pipe, &c. The motto VIN DE PAISAN.

LXX. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leasows,
Dear Mr. Jago, Nov. 15, 1752.

COULD I with convenience mount my horse, and ride to Harbury this instant, I should much more willingly do so than begin this letter. Such terrible events have happened to us, since we saw each other last, that, however irksome it may be to dwell upon them, it is, in the same degree, unnatural to substitute any subject in their place.

I DO sincerely forgive your long silence, my good friend, indeed I do; though it gave me uneasiness,

uneaſineſs. I hope you do the ſame by mine. I own, I could not readily account for the *former* period of yours, any otherwiſe than by ſuppoſing that I had ſaid or done ſomething, in the levity of my heart, which had given you diſguſt; but being conſcious to myſelf of the moſt ſincere regard for you, and believing it could never be diſcredited for any *trivial* inadvertencies, I remember, I continued ſtill in expectation of a letter, and did not dream of writing till ſuch time as I had received one. I truſted you would write at *laſt*; and that, by all my paſt endeavours to demonſtrate my *friendſhip*, you would believe the *tree* was rooted in my heart, whatever irregularity you might obſerve in the *branches*.

THIS was my ſituation before that dreadful æra which gave me ſuch a ſhock as to baniſh my beſt friends for a time out of my memory. And when they recurred, as they did the firſt of any thing, I was made acquainted with that deplorable misfortune of yours! Believe me, I ſympathized in *your* affliction, notwithſtanding my own; but alas! what comfort could I adminiſter, who had need of every poſſible aſſiſtance to ſupport myſelf? I wrote indeed a few letters with *difficulty*; amongſt the reſt, one to

my friend Graves; but it was to vent my complaint.—I will ſend you the letter, if you pleaſe, as it is by far my leaſt painful method of conveying you ſome account of my ſituation. Let it convince you, that I could have written nothing at that time, which could have been of any ſervice to you: let it afford you, at leaſt, a faint ſketch of my deareſt brother's character; but let it not appear an oſtentatious diſplay of ſorrow, of which I am by no means guilty. I know but too well that I diſcovered upon the occaſion, what ſome would call, an unmanly tenderneſs; but I know alſo, that ſorrow upon ſuch ſubjects as theſe is very conſiſtent with virtue, and with the moſt abſolute reſignation to the juſt decrees of Providence. "Hominis eſt enim affici dolore, *ſen-*
"*tire*; reſiſtere tamen & ſolatia admittere, non
"ſolatiis non egere." Pliny.—I drank, purchaſed amuſements, never ſuffered myſelf to be a minute without company, no matter what, ſo it was but continual. At length, by an attention to ſuch converſation and ſuch amuſements as I could at other times deſpiſe, I forgot ſo far as to be chearful.—And after this, the ſummer, through an almoſt conſtant ſucceſſion of lively and agreeable viſitants, proved even a ſcene of jollity.—It was inebriation all, though of a

mingled

mingled nature; yet has it maintained a sort of truce with grief, till time can assist me more effectually by throwing back the event to a distance.—Now, indeed, that my company has all forsaken me, and I am delivered up to winter, silence, and reflection, the incidents of the last year revive apace in my memory; and I am even astonished to think of the gaiety of my summer. The fatal anniversary, the "dies "quem semper acerbum, &c." is beginning to approach, and every face of the sky suggests the ideas of last winter.—Yet I find myself chearful in *company*; nor would I recommend it to you to be much alone.—You would lay the highest obligation upon me by coming over at this time.—I pressed your brother, whom I saw at Birmingham, to use his influence with you; but if you can by no means undertake the journey, I will take my speediest opportunity of seeing you at Harbury.—Mr. Miller invited me strenuously to meet Dr. Lyttelton at his house; but I believe my most convenient season will be, when my Lord Dudley goes to Barrels; for I can but ill bear the pensiveness of a long and lonely expedition. After all, if you *could* come hither first, it would afford me the most entire satisfaction.—I have been making alterations in my house that would amuse you, and

have

have many matters to discourse with you, which it would be endless to mention upon paper.—Adieu! my dear friend! may your merit be known to some one who has greater *power* to serve you than myself; but be assured, at the same time, that no one loves you better, or esteems you more.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXI. To the same.

The Leasows,
Jan. 29, 1753.

Dear Mr. Jago,

ALTHOUGH I have many reasons to urge why I did not write to you before, or visit you from Barrels as I fully intended, I will venture to wave all particulars till I see you; and only assure you in the general, that I was never able to write any thing satisfactory, or to visit you, at that time, with any sort of convenience.

BELIEVE me, my good friend, if *inclination* might have ruled, I had been with you at Harbury

bury many weeks ago. Sure I am, they must be the *cares* of home, and not the *pleasures* of it, that *ever were* sufficient to detain me during the *winter season*. Nor do I think I have an enemy that wishes me more miserable than I have, almost constantly, found myself ever since the beginning of *it*.

I CANNOT even now fix a time when I can see you; and perhaps it may be deferred till Mr. Miller's place will have received some advantage from the Spring: and, in that case, I would infallibly see my Lord Guilford's; but I leave this undetermined: and I hope, if you *can* wander from home with any kind of satisfaction, you will do me the justice to believe, that you have no friend alive who will more gladly receive you than myself.

I HAVE papered some rooms this last year, and would willingly have you see them before their colours are vanished; which, I think, will unavoidably be the case of *one*, before a second summer be half concluded.

THUS is beauty as uncertain as either fortune or fame.

I SUPPOSE

I SUPPOSE you have heard there is a citation from Doctors Commons, and a writ of "Ne "exeat" out againſt Mr. W— for an intrigue with ———. If you have not, be not *precipitate* in ſpreading the ſtory.—They ſay, he has fled into France on the occaſion.—What a ſhocking affair is this! ſo early in life! ſo extenſive, ſo laſting, ſo irremediable in its conſequences! but,

"Sic viſum Veneri! cui placet *impares*
"*Formas* atque *animos*, ſub juga ahenea,
"*Sævo* mittere cum joco!"

Your misfortunes and mine incline *us*, almoſt, to love *all* people that are miſerable; but how will the daughters of the Philiſtines rejoice on the occaſion; nay, almoſt countenance another's loſs of virtue by manifeſting their own apparent want of humanity!

THERE is a moſt admirable piece of allegory on this head in the Female Fables, by Brooks, if I miſtake not; to whom the author in his preface acknowledges himſelf greatly indebted.

I AM truly ſorry to underſtand how much you are alone; I really imagined you were much

much happier in point of company than myſelf, as you live in a much politer neighbourhood; amongſt perſons of genius, learning, and humanity. And happier you *are*; for however I make a ſhift to ſcrape ſome company around me, they are ſuch as can affect me with little elſe beſides the ſpleen.

Do not dwell too much on ſubjects that make you thoughtful; ſuperficial amuſements are our point, till ſome time hence: I am an ill adviſer; but I preſcribe you the methods which I have found moſt effectual with myſelf.

I HAVE not been forgetful of the taſk that you enjoined me, to give you my obſervations on the verſes which you incloſed.—I will write my ſentiments on a ſeparate paper. Do not puniſh me with ſilence and ſuſpence concerning you, but write. I can ardently deſire what I but little deſerve, being

Your moſt affectionate friend,

W. S.

LXII. To

LXXII. To the ſame.

The Leaſows,
Dear Mr. Jago, Feb. 27, 1753.

I WROTE you ſome account of myſelf, and incloſed ſome trivial criticiſms, in a letter I ſent you about a fortnight ago, which I hope you have received.—Tom comes now to enquire after your health, and to bring back my ode to Colonel Lyttelton; in regard to which, I deſire, that you will not be ſparing of your animadverſions. I whiſpered my difficulties to Mr. Miller at Hagley, how delicate I found the ſubject, and how hard it was to ſatisfy either myſelf or others; in all which points he agreed with me. Nevertheleſs, having twice broken my *promiſe* of ſending a corrected copy to Sir George, I was obliged to make my peace by a *freſh* one, which I ſuppoſe, I muſt, of neceſſity, perform.—Give me your whole ſentiments hereupon, I beſeech you; in particular and in general, as a critic and as a friend.—The bad ſtate of ſpirits which I complained of in my laſt, for a long time together made me utterly irreſolute: every thing occaſioned me ſuſpence; and I did nothing with appetite.—This was owing in a great meaſure

to

to a slow nervous fever, as I have since discovered by many concurrent symptoms. It is now, I think, wearing off by degrees. I seem to anticipate a little of that "vernal delight" which Milton mentions, and thinks

"Able to chase
"All sadness, but despair."

At least, I begin to resume my silly clue of hopes and expectations; which, I know, however, *will* not guide me to any thing more satisfactory than before.

I HAVE read scarce any new books this season. Voltaire's new Tragedy was sent me from London; but what has given me the most amusement, *has* been the "Lettres de Madame de "Maintenon." You have probably read them already in English, and then I need not recommend them. The Life of Lord Bolingbroke is entirely his *public* life, and the book three parts filled with political remarks.

As to *writing*, I have not attempted it this year and more; nor do I know when I shall again.—However, I would be glad to correct that Ode "To the Dutchess of Somerset," when

when once I can find in whose hands it is depositted. I was *shewn* a very elegant letter of hers, the other day; wherein she asks for it with great politeness. And as it includes nothing but a love of rural life, and such sort of amusements as she herself approves, I shall stand a good chance of having it received with partiality. She lives the life of a *religieuse*. She has *written* my Lady Luxborough a very serious letter of condolence upon the misfortune in her family; and need enough has Lady Luxborough of so unchangeable a friend! for sure nothing could have happened to a person in her situation more *specifically* unfortunate.—Mr. Reynolds has been at Barrels, I hear, and has brought her a machine that goes into a coat-pocket, yet answers the end of "a jack "for boots, a reading-desk, a cribbage-board, "a pair of snuffers, a ruler, an eighteen inch-"rule, three pair of nutcracks, a lemon-squeezer, "two candlesticks, a picquet-board, and the "Lord knows what beside."—Can you form an idea of it? if you can, do you not think it must give me pain to reflect, that I myself am useful for *no* sort of purpose, when a paltry bit of wood can answer so *many?* but, indeed, whilst it *pretends* to these exploits, it performs nothing *well*; and therein I agree with it. So true it

is,

is, with regard to me, what I told you long ago,

"Multa & præclara minantem
"Vivere nec recte, nec suaviter!"

We have a turnpike bill upon the point of being brought into the House of Commons: it will convey you about half the way betwixt Birmingham and Hales, and from thence to Hagley; but, I trust, there will be a *left-hand* attraction, which will always make you deviate from the strait line.

I should be ashamed to reflect how much I have dwelt upon *myself* in this letter; but that I seriously approve of egotism in letters: and were I *not* to do so, I should not have any other subject. I have not a single neighbour, that is either fraught with politeness, literature, or intelligence; much less have I a tide of spirits to set my invention afloat; but the less I am able to amuse *you*, the more desirous am I of your letters; which afford me the truest entertainment, even when my spirits are ever so much depressed.

That universal chearfulness which is the lot of some people, persons that you and I may

envy at the same time that we *despise*, is worth all that either fortune or nature can bestow.

I am, with entire affection,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXIII. To Mr. GRAVES.

The Leasows,
Mar. 28, 1753.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I AM vexed to find you have no copy of those verses.—I must make a fresh enquiry; and should they happen to accompany this letter, as I fear they will *not*, be so good as to assist me all you can in the way of *hints* and *corrections*. Corrections of what *is*, and hints of what *may be*. I do not reckon much upon these verses, or the patronage which you mention; though the Dutchess is a woman of high reputation, and has as much benevolence as any woman upon earth.

I DO

I DO *not* include the design of visiting Bath as a public place: I have long since given up such schemes of gaiety and expence. I visit *you* and *Mrs. Graves*; at the least, I mean to do so.

INOCULATION is a point on which I never speak a syllable in the way of *pro* or *con*: I mean, not so as to influence particulars; for, in the general, I esteem it both right and salutary, and even *right* because we *find* it *salutary*.

I DO not know whether I could not bear the *dishonour* of friends or relations better than their *death*.—It must afford one no small satisfaction to give them one's affection and assistance under every frailty to which human nature is exposed; at least, so long as they are true to friendship. It is Mr. Whistler's opinion, as well as mine. But Mr. ———'s case is altogether different; and I make no question that he thinks as you do upon the occasion.

POOR Danvers's death affects me more than you would perhaps imagine. If you remember, I was at M—— when the scheme of his going abroad was in agitation. —I think how this

event must affect Mrs. T—, whose concern will not be *lessened* by her long separation from him. I dare say he reckoned upon his relations here as his *best estate*, whatever he might gain elsewhere; and, no doubt, the hope of retiring amongst them has been a constant spur to his diligence.—The event was always uncertain, and has proved at last unfortunate; yet, as Melmoth says very justly, "The course of human affairs requires that we should act with "vigour upon very precarious contingencies."—I desire you would give me a sight of the Latin inscription.

I THINK it was the Gentleman's Magazine in which I was shewn your verses.

I HAVE a particular and lively idea of your place; though I do not remember to have seen even such *parts* of a scene as I have united together in my imagination. I cannot think otherwise than that the front-door opens here, the garden-door there, the stream runs in this place, &c. &c.

"Hac ibat Simois, hæc est Sigeia tellus."

THE sight of the place could not impress my imagination more deeply; though the impression

I *am*

I *am to* acquire will hardly leave one line of my preſent one remaining. *Cabbage-garden ornée* is very high burleſque, and affects the improvements of your friend too nearly.

LET me know in what manner Mrs. Graves and you are drawn. Be as particular as you pleaſe.

I COULD not be clear from your letter whether you had received the box or not. That, together with the tallies, lay on the table before me, while I wrote to you laſt; and went with my letter to Birmingham.—Pray ſatisfy me directly whether you received them.—They are trifles indeed; but, as they acquit me of my promiſe, they are virtually of conſequence.

MR. Whiſtler has not anſwered a letter which I ſent him above two months ago: nay, I think, a quarter of a year.

You are rich.—I have only to wiſh the continuance of your riches, with ſome diminution of your fatigue. And yet the moſt laborious man in the world is, I am fully aſſured, more happy than the *lazieſt*.

"THE Rival Brothers" has ſome of Dr. Young's affectations; and I queſtion if the moral be abſolutely true—at leaſt, Mr. Addiſon is in ſome meaſure againſt it: but, on the whole, I think it a noble Tragedy; abounding as much with refined ſentiments and elevated expreſſions, as "The Gameſter" and "The Earl of Eſſex" are deficient in *both*.

MY verſes are not yet ſent to Sir George Lyttelton; *I* ſtart new difficulties, and cannot make them to my mind: yet have promiſed him a copy, and diſappointed him thrice; and can hardly defer it much longer without great offence.

I HAVE ſcarce been twenty yards from home this winter. Laſt night I viſited one of my neighbours; and what with wine, ſitting up late, a perfect flux of diſcourſe, and a return home through the dark, found myſelf *vertiginous* before I was aware. Never did Prior's manly deſcription, "I "drank, I liked it not, &c." ſeem ſo natural to me as it does to-day. I am abſolutely vile in my own ſight, and I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes. I was *never* ſo intoxicated as not to know what I ſaid, or to talk mere nonſenſe; and

and yet how many things could I wish unsaid that I let fall last night!

We are going to add two new bells to our present set of six; to have a turnpike road from Hagley to Birmingham, through Hales; and to emerge a little from our obscurity. I am, dear Sir, with compliments to Mrs. Graves,

Ever most affectionately yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXXIV. To the same, with Observations on Arms, Inscriptions, &c.

The Leasows,
Dear Mr. Graves, July 15, 1753.

I send you my Ode, as I sent it to the Dutchess some weeks ago. Why I pitched upon one reading sooner than another, I will not now explain: nor will I trouble you to make any fresh remarks upon it at present; only, when you happen to read it over at your leisure, if any thing occurs to you that would

tend to perfect it, I would beg you occasionally to make some memorandums. I have not yet received an answer; but, as I accompanied the verses with a letter, I suppose I shall receive one in return. I also added, to fill a blank space in my paper-book, a poem which I call "The Vista;" and which you may perhaps recollect: how properly I know not, for I had the benefit of no person's *judgement* or advice.

Lord Dudley made Mr. Dolman a present of a piece of plate, a large cup, in consideration of his sister's being at Broom about half a year. There was on it, one supporter awkwardly enough holding up the coronet in his paw; and from the coronet proceeded a label, with "amoris ergo Dudley." I do not know who was the manager, or whence he had the inscription; but I think, from Dr. H—. This is *elegant* and *enough*. Nevertheless, as there may be some convenience in dazzling the eyes of the people where I dwell, and as *such* eyes as theirs are not to be dazzled, and hardly *struck*, by *elegance* alone, I chose the method that was most *magnificent*.—I wish they are not invidious enough to say, that *his* arms are engraved there for want of some of my *own*: so I would not be long before I remove their notable suggestion. —I have truly so low an opinion of arms since they

became purchaseable by money, and since the present unlimited use of them, that were I to find a coat to my name in the office, which I did not like, I would not use it; but substitute what was more agreeable: yet some *sort* of *right* or *claim* is requisite to satisfy one's delicacy with an opinion of *property*; and indeed, to fix one's *choice*, where one has the whole furniture of the universe for *its* object.—After all, the vulgar are more struck with arms than any thing; "stupet in titulis & imaginibus;" and, I believe, there were near two hundred people gathered round Lady Luxborough's landeau at Birmingham, and declaring her arms to be very *noble*, or otherwise.—I do not, therefore, chuse to employ a vulgar *mind* about this matter.—Were you to go to London, I should gladly solicit *you*; or if you have any friend you could write to in town, to search the office; for really I have none that I like *for the purpose*. It will not cost above a couple of shillings.—I will send you a draught of the lid of my standish when it arrives:—for I really do not know what Mr. Hylton will put upon it: I find, he consults with Dr. B—, my Lord's physician.—"*De* Dudley" would run most abominably, and "Baro Dudley" may be authorized by the frequent practice of Maittaire.—If it is inscribed

"Dudley"

"Dudley" *alone*, I can add the reſt if I ſhould hereafter think proper; and I wiſh it may be ſo.

My verſes to the Colonel are not yet tranſcribed.

I think the Latin inſcription to your brother very elegant; and I ſhould not care to have any part of it omitted.—I would, by all means, have this little hiſtory of his life perpetuated. "His ſaltem, &c." And were you to put it into Engliſh, it would be too long for an inſcription; —unleſs you were, by means of a printed elegy with notes, or any other ſuch method, to produce the ſame effect; and then you might make the epitaph as ſhort as you pleaſed.—After all, the *firſt* method is perhaps as eligible. When the affair is nearer a concluſion, I ſhould be glad to be of any ſervice.—I will think, and write again about it.

And now, having ſpoke to ſuch matters as have been the ſubject of our late correſpondence, I am at liberty to diverſify my letter as I may.—I ſhould be glad to know in your next whether you have heard of late from Mr. Whiſtler; and whether he is confined at home as uſual by his mother's ſtate of health. I almoſt

deſpair

deſpair of ever ſeeing him again at The Leaſowes, though there is hardly any pleaſure I ſo much covet as that of ſurprizing him with the *alterations* I have *made*, and the *articles* I have *purchaſed*, during the five years ſince he was in Shropſhire: add to this, the ſeveral *acquaintances* I have formed which he would like, and the amuſing viſits I could pay hereabouts with freedom.—I do not know whether you ſaw Mr. Davenport and his family at Bath this ſpring. He is laying out his environs, and I am by appointment to go over the week after next. He has alſo a painter at this time taking views round his houſe; which is one of the moſt magnificent in our county; yet I never leave home but with reluctance.—I really *love* no PLACE ſo well; and it is a great favour in me to allot any one a week of my *ſummer*.—Add to this, that my conſtitution requires nurſing; and I am moſt *happy*, where I am moſt *free*. It is in vain to ſay, they *allow* you all freedom, where you cannot allow it *yourſelf*. For this reaſon, I never more enjoy myſelf, than I do at The Grange; and yet this to ſome may appear paradoxical.

I YESTERDAY embelliſhed my chalybeate ſpring.—The inſcription that is *cut* on the ſtone, is as follows, viz.

"FONS

" FONS FERRVGINEVS.
" DIVAE QVAE SECESSV ISTO
" FRVI CONCEDIT
" SALVTI S."

Yet I queſtion whether ſome of the following be not preferable; if they are, I beg you will tell me. One ſhilling and ſix-pence produces the alteration:

" FONS FERRVGINEVS.
" DIVAE PER QUAM LICET
" HOC SECESSV FRVI, &c.
" SAL. &c."

or,

" DIVAE PER QVAM LATEBRAE
" QUAEVIS OBLECTANT
" &c."

or,

" DIVAE LOCORVM OMNIVM
" COMMENDATRICI, &c."

or,

" DIVAE NIMIRVM RVSTICAE
" SALVTI SACER."

or,

" DIVAE CVI DEBETVR
" LOCORVM OMNIVM AMOENITAS
" &c."

or,

or,

" DIVAE PER QVAM LICET
" INORNATO RVRE LAETARI."

BELIEVE me ever, with my beſt compliments to Mrs. Graves,

Your moſt obliged

and moſt affectionate ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXV. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 29, 1754.

I AM at a loſs how to begin this letter.—I will not, however, after the uſual way, give you a tedious liſt of *apologies* in the front of it. Some account of my long ſilence you will find diſperſed throughout the letter; and as for what is deficient, I will depend upon your friendſhip.

THERE

THERE has not been a perſon here ſince you left me, of whom I could obtain the leaſt intelligence concerning you. And as an enquiry by the poſt was my only obvious method, I do acknowledge myſelf to blame, notwithſtanding all the excuſes that I can make.

AMIDST that conflux of viſitants whom I received this laſt ſeaſon, I was hardly once *ſo* happy as I was in *your* company. I was the happier in ſeeing *you* ſo; and, if you remember, I took notice at the time, how little your vivacity was impaired in compariſon of my own. If I was *then* but a dull *companion*, gueſs whether ſolitude and winter were likely to make me a better *correſpondent*. That vein of gaiety and humour, which you were once ſo partial as to diſcover in my letters, will ſcarce appear there any more: not even to the eyes of the moſt partial friend I have. Should you deny what I aſſert, and impute it to a fit of ſpleen, yet you may *allow* that it will ſcarce enliven any letter that I write in *winter*. Friendſhip ſtill remains! Friendſhip, like the root of ſome perennial flower, even *then* perhaps gathers ſtrength in ſecret; that it may afford a better diſplay of its colours in the ſpring.

I DO

I DO not pretend this to be an adequate apology. I know, my deareſt friend, that you both *like* to ſee and hear from me: it proves, however, that you have no great *loſs* either of my letters or my company.

I AM, as the phraſe is, deeply penetrated by the civilities of your Mr. Miller. He took a ſhort dinner with me once this ſeaſon, dropping Sir George at Mr. P—'s.—He could not have pleaſed me better.—Here he happened to meet Mr. Lyttelton and Captain Whood. He afterwards breakfaſted here, and in general ſeemed glad of every occaſion to bring me the genteeleſt company. To him I owe Miſs Banks and Lord Temple. Can you think that Radway now, as well as Harbury, has no attractions for me? You know me too well; but I have not truly ſuch a ſtate of health as to dare to be from home. Friends will ſay, "you may be as free "at our houſes as your own, &c." and they will *mean* as they *ſay*; but if you cannot make *yourſelf* ſo, what is all this to the purpoſe?

I CANNOT give you a detail of what has paſſed with me ſince I ſaw you. Lord Dudley, with myſelf, made one viſit to Lord Plymouth's.

We

We met Mr. and Mrs. Winnington.—We took a trip to Mr. Vernon's, where we found Mr. Coventry and other company. The impreſſions I received from them would afford ſubject for *converſation* betwixt you and me; but I muſt not aſſign too much of my paper to that purpoſe.

Lord Plymouth's piece of water ſhould have been a ſerpentine river. I could give you ſtrong reaſons.—I think my Lord ſuch a character as will make a reputable figure in life:—*beloved* he *is*, and *muſt* be at firſt ſight.—Lady Plymouth is the moſt amiable of women; and, of all the world, the propereſt perſon that my Lord could have choſen. The plan for their houſe I think right; ſuppoſing it right to continue it where it is. The park is capable of ſome conſiderable beauties. Lord Plymouth has been once here ſince, and talks of cauſing me to come, and deſign for his environs.—I ſeem to be highly in his favour.—I hope ſome time to meet you there.

My Ode, after an aſtoniſhing delay, was preſented to the Dutcheſs of Somerſet.—It produced me two genteel letters from her Grace. I am well ſatisfied with the event, for ſome reaſons,

ſons, which I will one day give you—none of moment.—Soon after this, Dodſley preſſed me to contribute, as amply as I pleaſed, to a fourth volume of his Miſcellanies. I at firſt meant to do ſo pretty largely; I then changed my mind, and ſent only ſome little pieces. Part of theſe were my own; part Mr. Whiſtler's, Mr. Graves's, and ſome accidental pieces of others, which I found in my bureau.—I purpoſed to ſend ſomething of yours too; of *myſelf*, if I was *hurried*; elſe, not without your conſent. What I thought of was, your Linnets. Laſt week he writes me word, that the town will now be too much engroſſed by the buſineſs of elections; and that he does not proceed this winter.—So that we ſhall now, you ſee, have time to meet, or write upon the ſubject.

Mr. Graves ſent me the incloſed little fable, for Dodſley, if I approved it.—I made ſome alterations, and ſent it.—Return it to me, if you pleaſe.—It is pretty; but the inſcription muſt be "To a Friend."

Some correſpondence I have had this winter with Mr. Hylton, about toys and trinkets which he gets done for me in London. He is by far a better *friend* and *correſpondent* than a

poet. Should you take a trip to town, he would be quite *proud* to see you.

I AM now, like the rest of the world, perusing Sir Charles Grandison.—I know not whether that world *joins* me, in preferring Clarissa. The author wants the art of *abridgement* in every thing that he has written, yet I am much his admirer.

MY dear friend! cherish and preserve your own vivacity, and let not this phlegmatic epistle impair it. If occasion offers, call on me for my *own* sake; and believe you have not alive a more affectionate friend.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on the Alternations of Pleasure and Pain.

The Leasowes,
April 19, 1754.

Dear Mr. Graves,

IT is a long, long time, according to the computation of friendship, since I had the pleasure of a line from you, and I write chiefly to remind

remind you of it; not with any hopes of affording you the amusement of a single minute. In truth, I have not spirits for it. The severity, the duration, the solitude, of this winter have well-nigh exhausted them.—The succession, the regular succession, of pain and pleasure becomes every day more clear to me. It begins to seem as ordinary as the course of day and night. Thus my last summer was the most amusing I ever saw; my winter the most disagreeable. Allow me to except one only: I mean, that ever-mournful winter which robbed me of my dearest relation. Sometimes this pain and pleasure are contrasted within the compass of a day. Sometimes, in different weeks, &c. &c. However, do not think me superstitious. There is hardly a person that is *less* so. Yet I am firmly persuaded of the alternation, either in the mind, or in the events themselves. My summer, I said before, was highly entertaining; my winter rendered equally disagreeable, by a long-continued squabble amongst our principal parishioners, and by the death of my best-beloved and the most accomplished of my relations, M— D—. She risqued going to London for the sake of finding something *new*; was seized with the small-pox, and died in all her bloom.—The natural conse-

quence which we ſhould draw from obſervations of this ſort is, equanimity; "æquam memento "rebus, &c." and again, "ſperat infeſtis, me- "tuit ſecundis, &c." Enough of this, which I ſhould not mention, but that the fact itſelf ſtrikes me continually more and more; and were I to mark the pleaſing and unpleaſing parts of my exiſtence in an almanac, as the Romans did their *Faſti* and *Nefaſti*, I know not if, at the year's end, the black and white marks would not nearly balance each other.

I HAVE bought Hogarth's Analyſis: it is really entertaining; and has, in ſome meaſure, adjuſted my notions with regard to beauty in general. For inſtance, were I to draw a ſhield, I could give you reaſons from hence why the ſhape was pleaſing or diſagreeable. I would have you *borrow* and read it.

GRANDISON I cannot think equal to Clariſſa; though, were merit in this age to be preferred, the author of it deſerves a biſhoprick.

JAGO has been fortunate for once; but the value of his livings muſt be exaggerated in the news-papers.

IF

If Mr. Whiſtler would give me a viſit in the height of my ſeaſon this year, I would look upon it as one of the moſt pleaſing events that could happen to the remainder of my life; and I would not preſume to hope that fate would ever allow me a repetition of it.

My love of toys is not quite exhauſted.—I have purchaſed, or rather renovated, ſome that are both rich and beautiful, though ſhort of what I meant them. I have amuſed myſelf with deſigning little ornaments this winter, ſome of which may turn to account under the management of ſome Birmingham mechanic.—To atchieve *eaſe*, in that ſeaſon, is the moſt that I can *hope*; and it is more than I often *obtain*.

Excuse this worthleſs letter; which *muſt* coſt you money, as they tell me franks are uſeleſs. I could not avoid ſome uneaſineſs upon reflecting how long you have been ſilent. Preſent my beſt compliments to Mrs. Graves; and pay a tribute of one ſingle half-ſheet to that affection with which I am ever

Yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXXVII. To the same, on the Death of Mr. Whistler.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, June 7, 1754.

THE melancholy account of our dear friend Whistler's death was conveyed to me, at the same instant, by yours and by his brother's letter. I have written to his brother this post; though I am very ill able to write upon the subject, and would willingly have waved it longer, but for decency. The triumvirate which was the greatest happiness, and the greatest pride, of my life is broken! The fabric of an ingenuous and disinterested friendship has lost a noble column! yet it may, and *will*, I trust, endure till one of us be laid as low. In truth, one can so little satisfy one's self with what we say upon such sad occasions, that I made three or four essays before I could *endure* what I had written to his brother.—Be so good as excuse me to him as well as you can, and establish me in the good opinion of him and Mr. Walker.

Poor Mr. Whistler! how do all our little strifes and bickerments appear to us at this time!

time! yet we may with comfort reflect, that they were not of a *fort* that touched the *vitals* of our friendſhip; and I may ſay, that we fondly loved and eſteemed each other, of neceſſity. "Tales animas *oportuit* eſſe concordes." Poor Mr. Whiſtler! not a ſingle acquaintance have I made, not a ſingle picture or curioſity have I purchaſed, not a ſingle embelliſhment have I given to my place, ſince he was laſt here, but I have had his approbation and his amuſement in my eye. I will aſſuredly inſcribe my larger urn to his memory; nor ſhall I paſs it without a pleaſing melancholy during the remainder of my days. We have each of us received a pleaſure from *his* converſation, which no other converſation can afford us at our preſent time of life.

ADIEU! my dear friend! may our remembrance of the perſon we have loſt be the ſtrong and everlaſting cement of our affection! Aſſure Mr. John Whiſtler of the regard I have for him, upon his *own* account, as well as his brother's. Write to me; directly if you have opportunity. Whether you have or no, believe me to be ever moſt affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mrs. Graves.

LXXVIII. To the same.

The Leasowes,
July 15, 1754.

Dear Mr. Graves,

THE *particulars* relating to our poor friend's departure occasioned me much concern, and indeed some tears: yet as *those* particulars are what one covets to hear, and the melancholy which they produce is never unmixed with pleasure, I think myself much obliged to you for the care you took to convey them. It is possible, the letters I wrote to you and Mr. J. Whistler might appear too tender from a *mere* friend of the deceased; but there is a sympathy betwixt friends, which is not always found amongst relations; nor does *kindred* imply *friendship* a whit more than *friendship* does *kindred*. It is not many weeks ago, that I had a bill filed against me in Chancery by young D—, the only near relation I have by the mother's side; and the next in lineal succession to my share of the Penn's estate.—Do not let this surprize you.—I believe the affair will be accommodated.—He only wanted to procure a division of the Harborough estate at a large expence, which might be better adjusted without *any*;

in

in other words, to run his head againſt a ſtone-wall, that he might have a chance of cauſing it to tumble upon *me*. Would you conſent that I ſhould ſuffer him to have the manſion-houſe at Harborough thrown into his lot? Were I ſo to do, I could make it advantageous to myſelf, and the diſpute were at an end; but I have a kind of romantic veneration for that *place* and *family*; which, if you remember, I have expreſſed in one of my beſt elegies *.

PRAY what will become of our letters to Mr. Whiſtler? as I am not conſcious of any thing diſhonourable in mine (and I am *ſure* I may ſay the ſame of yours), methinks I could wiſh that they might not be deſtroyed. It is from a few letters of my own or others alone, accidentally preſerved, that I am able to recollect what I have been doing ſince I was born.

I MET, when I was laſt at Barrels, a ſurgeon of Bath, whoſe name, I think, was Cleland. He knew your name and place; but, I find, was not perſonally acquainted with you.—I am glad enough to hear that your place gets into vogue. It is, I think, what you ſhould *chuſe*, upon all accounts. Let the beauty of the place guide

* Elegy xv.

them

them to the merits of its *owner*. I have often thought, myself, that were a person to live at The Leasowes, of more merit than myself, and a few degrees more worldly prudence, he could scarce want opportunities to procure his own advancement. My rural embellishments are perhaps more considerable than yours; but then the vicinity of Bath might occasion you a greater conflux.—Your unexpensive illuminations please me highly.—I have purposed these many years to purchase a set of tin-lamps, of about fourpence a-piece, to stick against trees, and to use upon occasion in my coppice; or rather in my grove, where some of the water-falls would not fail to shew delightfully.

You asked me about Jago's preferment. The living *last given* him by the Bishop of Worcester is, I believe, near an hundred pounds a year. With this, he has Harbury, of about fifty; and Chellerton, a sort of chapel of ease, about forty; in the *whole*, therefore, about a hundred and ninety: but then he is obliged to keep a curate; and what I think yet worse is, that he cannot make it *convenient* to *live* at his new situation, which is a pretty one.

I HAVE had some visitants this season; indeed as many, and as considerable, as such a sort of season

season could afford me. A Scotch peer called upon me in his way through Birmingham: his title was ——. He seemed to have a very clear head, a very polite and easy manner, and all the refinement of true taste, *without* the warmth or appetite.—I could not help thinking him, on many accounts, characteristic of the Scottish nation.

WOULD to God I could see you and Mrs. Graves here this summer! I have the same wish it may be *my* lot to visit *you*, next autumn. Be assured, I *purpose* it.

I EXPECT Dodsley every week. He will, I am convinced, be for publishing his Miscellany next winter. Would Mr. W—, think you, agree, that you and I should be allowed to publish such of poor Mr. Whistler's papers there, as we judged were most likely to do credit to his memory?

ADIEU! dear Mr. Graves. Let us reconcile our affections to the ordinary events of life; and let us adopt my friend Jago into our second triumvirate. I am, however, always, with *peculiar* attachment, yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

MY best compliments to Mrs. Graves.

P. S.

P. S. SINCE I wrote the foregoing, I have had Mr. Davenport of Davenport-houſe, with all his family. — His brother, the clergyman, remembered you by your picture. — His wife is the fineſt *perſon*, &c. I have ſeen here, except Lady Ayleſbury — ingenious, eaſy-behaved, and of an excellent temper. — They come to Bath in a fortnight.

SINCE that time, Sir George Lyttelton, Mr. Lyttelton, and Miſs Lyttelton. — Sir George thinks ſome alterations requiſite in my verſes, to which I cannot bring myſelf eaſily to conform — but muſt.

I LOOK upon my ſcheme of embelliſhing my farm as the only lucky one I ever purſued in my life. — My place now brings the world home to me, when I have too much indolence to go forth in queſt of it.

LXIX. To the ſame, on hearing that his Letters to Mr. Whiſtler were deſtroyed.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Oct. 23, 1754.

IT is certainly ſome argument of a *peculiarity* in the eſteem I bear you, that I feel a readineſs to acquaint you with *more* of my foibles, than

than I care to truſt with any other perſon. I believe nothing ſhews us more plainly either the different *degrees* or *kinds* of regard that we entertain for our ſeveral friends (I may alſo add the *difference* of their *characters*), than the ordinary ſtyle and tenour of the letters we addreſs to them.

I CONFESS to *you*, that I am conſiderably mortified by Mr. John W—'s conduct in regard to my letters to his brother; and, rather than they ſhould have been ſo unneceſſarily deſtroyed, would have given more money than it is allowable for me to mention with *decency*. I look upon my letters as ſome of *my* chef-d'œuvres; and, could I be ſuppoſed to have the leaſt pretenſions to propriety of ſtyle or ſentiment, I ſhould imagine it muſt appear, principally, in my letters to his brother, and one or two more friends. I conſidered them as the records of a *friendſhip* that will be always *dear* to me; and as the *hiſtory* of my *mind* for theſe twenty years laſt paſt. The amuſement I ſhould have found in the peruſal of them would have been altogether innocent; and I would gladly have preſerved them, if it were only to explain thoſe which I ſhall preſerve of his brother's. Why he ſhould allow either *me* or *them* ſo very little weight as not to *conſult* me with regard to them, I can by no means conceive. I ſuppoſe it is not *un-cuſtomary* to return them to the ſurviving

friend. I had no answer to the letter which I wrote Mr. J. W—. I received a ring from him; but as I thought it an inadequate memorial of the friendship which his brother had for me, I gave it to my servant the moment I received it; at the same time I have a neat standish, on which I caused the lines Mr. W— left with it to be inscribed; and which appears to me a much more agreeable remembrancer.

I HAVE read your new production with pleasure; and as this letter begins with a confession of foibles, I will own, that through mere laziness I have sent you back your copy, in which I have made some erasements, instead of giving you my reasons on which those erasements were founded. Truth is, it seems to me to want mighty few variations from what is now the present text; and that, upon one more perusal, you will be able to give it as much perfection as you mean it to have. And yet, did I suppose you would insert it in Dodsley's Collection, as I see no reason you have to the contrary, I would take any pains about it that you should desire me. I must beg another copy, at your leisure.

I SHOULD like the inscription you mention upon a real stone-urn, which you purchase very reasonable at Bath: but you must not risque it

upon the vaſe you mention, on any account whatever.

Now I mention Bath, I muſt acquaint you, that I have received intelligence from the younger Dodſley, that his brother is now there, and that none of the papers I ſent him are yet *ſent to preſs*; that he expects his brother home about the fourth or fifth of November, when he proceeds with his publication. Poſſibly you may go to Bath whilſt he is there, and, if ſo, may chuſe to have an interview.

I SHALL ſend two or three little pieces of my own, in hopes that you will adjuſt the reading, and return them as ſoon as you conveniently can. All I can ſend to-night is this "Ode to Memory." I ſhall in the laſt place deſire your opinion asto the manner of *placing* what is ſent. The firſt pages of his Miſcellany muſt be already fixed. I think to propoſe ours for the laſt; but as to the *order*, it will depend entirely upon you.

Adieu! in other words, God bleſs you!—I have company at the table all the time I am writing. Your ever moſt affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXX.

LXXX. To Mr. Jago.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, June 16, 1754.

WERE I to pronounce my sentence upon the long suspension of our correspondence, I should impute the blame of it, in almost *equal* measure, to *yourself* and to *me*. To *you*, for an omission of the letter you *promised* me, when last in town; to me, for waiting in expectation of it, and for neglecting to do *justice* to the sentiments of my heart on the occasion of your late preferment. Great were the hopes I had indeed conceived, that your increase of revenue had been accompanied with a place of residence which was more *to your mind* than that where you at present abide; but I do not find by any accounts that you purpose to leave Harbury: for which, no doubt, you have reasons which I do not yet penetrate; but which may demand my assent the moment you discover them. I have but little to say of the life I have led since you received some account of me from Mr. Hylton in London. The Winter, or at least its *ministers*, continued to tyrannize during the *minority* of Spring; and the Spring has alike been slow in giving up the reins to Summer. Of

conse-

conſequence, I ſeem in a ſort of middle ſtate, betwixt a dull half-animated grub, and an inſignificant loco-motive fly. Neither in the *one* ſtate or *other* am I of the leaſt importance; but, from the advances which I have *already* made, you are *ſomewhat* the more likely to find me in your garden. About a fortnight ago I received a line or two from our intimate acquaintance and ſchool-fellow Mr. Hall. It was brought me by Sir Edward Boughton's gardener; a fellow of good taſte, to whom Mr. Hall deſired I would cauſe The Leaſowes to be ſhewn. I find you have delighted Mrs. Hall by ſome alterations which you propoſe for their environs, and which they thoroughly reſolve to put in execution. When I come over into Warwickſhire, as I hope to do ſoon, I ſhall be very glad to make them a viſit in your company. My ſpirits, though far from good, are better, in the main, than they were in winter; and, on ſome peculiar days, are raiſed as high as to *alacrity: very* ſeldom higher; ſeldom ſo high.

You muſt (from hence at leaſt) take matters in the order, or rather *diſorder* in which they occur: Mr. Miller I ſaw on Wedneſday laſt in Lady Lyttelton's coach, who ſtopped two minutes at my gate on her return from London. I enquired concerning you; but could gather no

intelligence.—Mr. Hylton, who is now in Warwickſhire (if he have not ſtrolled to London), has been with me ſeveral months this ſummer. He is adding a room or two to his place, which lies very near me; and purpoſes to reſide there ſo ſoon as it is finiſhed. The ſituation is not void of beauties; but, if you will pardon the vanity, muſt veil its bonnet to mine. I have heard of planting hollies, pyracanthas, and other berry-bearing greens, to attract thoſe Blackbirds which you have ſo effectually celebrated: it ſhall be *my* ambition to plant good neighbours; and, what with Lord Dudley and his exotics, Mr. Hylton with his foſſils, and myſelf with my *ferme ornée*, is there not ſome room to expect that we may attract the taſters this way? but firſt we muſt take ſome care to *advertiſe* them where their treaſures lie.—Another day is paſſed, and Mr. Miller, &c. has again been with me, and waked me out of a ſound ſleep to breakfaſt.—He mentions with what reluctance he *left* a ſurveyor at Radway, employed in taking plans of the field of battle near Edge-hill. This he purpoſes to enrich with a number of anecdotes, gleaned from his neighbourhood; which muſt probably render it extremely entertaining: and ſurely Edge-hill fight was never more unfortunate to the nation, than it was lucky for Mr. Miller. He prints, together with

with this plan, another ſheet of Radway Caſtle. I approve his deſign. He will, by this means, turn every bank and hillock of his eſtate there, if not into *claſſical*, at leaſt into *hiſtorical* ground.

I HAVE done mighty little about my grounds ſince laſt winter. As indolence has on *many* occaſions contributed to *impair* my finances, it is but juſt that it ſhould ſometimes contribute to *reſtore* them. Yet I am not quite deſtitute of ſomething new for your amuſement.

OF late I have neither *read* nor *written* a ſyllable. What pleaſed me laſt was Hogarth's Analyſis. I expect Dodſley down every week; and as he will ſpend a few days with me, I could wiſh you were to meet him. His genius is truly poetical, and his ſentiments altogether liberal and ingenuous.

I AM, at preſent, a ſurveyor of roads: employed in repairing my lane to the turnpike. How glad ſhould I be to meet you, and to ſhew you its *beauties!* to ſhew you Mr. Hylton's new ſeries of coins;—his *deſigns* as well as his *performances* at Lappa!—how glad ſhould I be to ſee you! yea, I would harldly fail to return with you to Harbury; were you to add this

one obligation. I left Mr. Miller in doubt whether he would not see me at Radway some time next week. Evil and capricious health (the particulars of which would make a detail of no importance) destroys all my punctuality, and bids me promise with *fear*. You, I trust, are mostly at home; and were you to be at Snitterfield, I would follow you without reluctance. So, with hopes to see you shortly, either in Warwickshire or Shropshire, I relinquish the subject.

I HAVE reserved a very melancholy subject for the last. May you, and Mr. Graves, and myself, stand firm to support the fabric of friendship, which has lost a very beautiful column in poor Mr. Whistler! he died of a sore-throat, which in a few days time turned to an inward mortification.—I will say no more on the occasion: very affecting has it been to me.—God preserve your life, your happiness, and your friendships! and may you ever be *assured* of *that* with which I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

SHALL I beg a line from you, as soon as may be?—I do, most earnestly.

I AM

I AM given to underſtand that I may expect a viſit this ſummer from the Biſhop of Worceſter; from Lord Ward, Lord Coventry, and Lord Guernſey.—It may be ſo; but honours of *this ſort*, which would formerly have affected me, perhaps *too* deeply, have now loſt much of their wonted poignancy. Can *ſuch* perſons bear to ſee the ſcenes *riant*, and to find the *owner* gloomy? Let *them*, as they are *able*, make my circumſtances more affluent; and they ſhall find the *reflection* in *my* face and in *their* reception; but, as this will never be, it is no compliment to declare, that an hour or two's interview with you or Mr. Graves outweighs the arrival of the whole Britiſh Peerage.

SOMETHING elſe I have to ſay. Young Pixell laſt winter told me, that the organiſt of Worceſter had ſet your Ode (The Blackbirds) to muſic; that he *liked* the muſick; and that he would ſing it next evening at the Birmingham concert. I have not heard him mention it *ſince*, and I *forgot* to enquire; but, if you happen to have the notes, I ſhould be glad if you would incloſe them for me.

I HAVE been of late much bent upon the encreaſe of *horns* in this neighbourhood.—Do no interpret me *perverſely*; I mean French-

horns only. My Lord Dudley has had a perſon to teach two of his ſervants—nothing—at my inſtigation; but your old acquaintance Maurice, *who lives at the corner of my coppice*, will exceed them in a week by means of a good ear. I have borrowed a horn for him. Adieu!

LXXXI. To C— W—, Eſq.

Dear Mr. W—, July 6, 1754.

YOU do me juſtice in believing that I am truly ſorry you have not been well. A degree or two of regularity more than what you have already will, I fancy, reſtore your health, and my ſatisfaction; and I beg you will afford me the earlieſt account of your recovery.

I CONSIDERED Maſter W—'s viſit as an abſolute engagement, and remained at home in conſtant expectation of him for a fortnight together.—I am, however, not ſorry, for his own ſake, that he is gone to Oxford, eſpecially as you ſeem to have an aſſurance of its proving advantageous. Pray aſſure him of my earneſt wiſhes for his happineſs, and that The Leaſowes

ſowes will be always at his ſervice, whenever, through the fickleneſs of human nature, he thinks proper to give up a Muſe for a Water-nymph.

I EXPECT Mr. Hylton daily.—He was laſt week in London, and is now, I believe, at Coventry.—He will probably viſit you before he comes into this country.—He talked of it when he left me.—I am obliged to be brief.

POST-WOMAN waits for me, "multa gemens." Dodſley is the man for your purpoſe.—He has, with good genius, a liberal turn of mind.—I expect him to ſpend a few days here every week.—I will, if he returns through Warwickſhire, occaſion him to call upon you; but you know he is often lame with the gout, and will hardly be able to make any long digreſſion.

Your caſe is exactly mine.—You ſay, you cannot bear wrongs with patience, but you can ſleep and *forget* them.—So can I—ſo do I.—Did I never tell you (if not, I do ſo now) that indolence will, in a thouſand inſtances, give one all the advantages of philoſophy? and pray, if you call me lazy any more, take care that you do not uſe an expreſſion by way of diſparagement, which I conſider as the higheſt honour. I am a fool, however, for diſcovering

my ſecret. What a number of compliments might you have made me unwittingly!

"Tacitus paſci ſi poſſet corvus, haberet
"Plus dapis, & rixæ minus, invidiæque."

HAD I time, I could comfort you under your ill-uſage, by diſcovering to you the ſimilitude of my own ſituation.

EXCUSE this ſcrawl; accept my compliments; carry them to Mrs. and Miſs W—; and believe me ever your obliged and moſt obedient humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXII. To Mr. JAGO, on their Contribution to Dodſley's Miſcellanies.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 22, 1755.

I AM ſure you muſt be puzzled how to account for my ſilence, after the honour you have done me by your verſes, and the requeſt you made that I would *write*.—I am alſo as much at a loſs how to give a proper weight to my

my apology. To say I have been ill, would perhaps imply too much: when I would only allude to that state of heaviness and dejection which is so frequently my lot at this time of the year; and which renders me both *averse* to writing, and utterly dissatisfied with every thing that I *do* write.

If at any time my head grew a little less confused than ordinary, I was obliged to devote my attention to the affair in which I had so *foolishly* involved myself with Dodsley. You are unable to conceive what vexation it has given me: I could not endure to *disappoint* him: of consequence, it has been my lot to study the delicacies of *poetry* when my brain was not sufficient to indite a piece of common prose; but as the *Mouse* (by which I mean my *own* performances) will so soon make its ridiculous appearance, it were totally impolitic in me to expatiate on the labours of the *Mountain*.—The first letter I received from you left me greatly dissatisfied. I was then to send D— my *final* instructions in a post or two.—You took little notice of any query I made; and intimated a disapprobation, which agreed *too well* with my own internal sentiments.—I knew not but you were *angry* at the *liberties* I had taken; though I could have suppressed any single paper which I had then conveyed to London.—Little did

did I *then* imagine that it was in my power to have protracted the affair till *now*. Had that been the case, I should have troubled you with repeated embassies; for I abhor the tediousness of the post, and my servants do little at this time of the year, that is of more importance than their master's poetry.

Your next letter convinced me, that you had taken no offence: and so far I was happy; but then I wanted to have your Gold-finches as correct as your Black-birds; there were *some* things I wished you to alter; and others in regard to which I was desirous to speak my *sentiments*. Add to this, my own *verses*, with which I was infinitely *more* dissatisfied. Why then did I not write?—The true reason was, that I was pressed by D— to send conclusions every post; and though I have had all this leisure (as it *happens*) since you wrote, I never could *depend* upon more than the space of a day or two. Besides, criticisms in the way of letter are extremely tedious and dissatisfactory; insomuch, that I am thoroughly determined never to print any thing for the future, unless I have the company of my friends when I send to the press. Hurried as I then was, I sent up your two copies, and what I proposed for him of my own, with a kind of *discretionary* power to select the best readings,

How-

How you would approve of this measure I knew not; but I had this to plead in my behalf, that D— was a person of taste *himself*; that he had, as I imagined, many learned friends to assist him; that his *interest* was concerned in the perfection of his Miscellany; and that I submitted my own pieces to the same judgement.

After all, I am but indifferently satisfied with the present state of these contributions. D— writes just so much as he deems *necessary* in the way of business, and passes by a thousand points in my letters which deserve an answer. His last acquaints me, that he has spent a whole day in the arrangement of what I have sent him; and that he purposes to send me *proof-sheets* before the close of this week, desiring I would send them back by the return of the post. Whether they arrive on Saturday or on Monday, I can keep them till the Thursday following.

And this brings me, in the last place, to the main purpose of this letter.—It is a request on which I lay great stress; and which you must not refuse me upon almost any consideration.—I beg, in short, that you would promise me the favour of your company on Monday (or even Tuesday) next, if possible; and let us jointly fix the

the readings of *your* pieces, of my *own*, and those of our common *friends*.—You will immediately comprehend the *expediency* of this; now, in particular, that our names are to appear. *Some* alterations I think *neceſſary* in your Goldfinches, and there are two or three ſtanzas which I think you might improve.—Nevertheleſs, I will not pretend that this journey is ſo *requiſite* upon your *own* account as *mine*; and will recommend it upon no other footing than the pleaſure you will receive by the obligation which you will confer.

I THOUGHT to have concluded here; but, as an envelope is now become altogether neceſſary, have a temptation to proceed which I did not ſee before.

IT is now become Friday the twenty-fourth of January. The packets I ſend, and the requeſt that I make upon ſo *little* warning, will, at firſt, aſtoniſh you.—Unforeſeen interruptions would not ſuffer me to diſpatch my courier ſooner.—What then remains, but that I endeavour to adjuſt this affair agreeably to its *preſent* circumſtances?

You will readily conceive from what you obſerve in my packets, how deſireable your company

pany is to me at this juncture. Supposing it then in your *power* to come over on Monday, Tuesday, or even Wednesday, I am inclined to believe you *will*. Supposing it *not* so, I can foresee you will not have leisure to satisfy my queries by the return of the bearer; and what I would *next* propose is, that you would either suffer me to send again to you betwixt this time and Thursday next; or that you would yourself dispatch a purpose-messenger, and allow me to pay for his journey.—In either of these *latter* cases, I am sure you so well know the nature of my present irresolution, that you will endeavour to afford me all the assistance you are able.

Adieu! my dear friend! and depend upon my best services on every possible occasion.

I am ever your most affectionate

and most obedient servant,

W. Shenstone.

LXXXIII. To

LXXXIII. To the ſame, on the ſame Subject.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Feb. 22, 1755.

I RECEIVED a letter from Dodſley, dated the fifteenth of February; informing me that you were then in town, had been with him, and left your directions whither he might ſend you a ſet of Miſcellanies.

FEBRUARY the twentieth, and not *before*, arrived young H—— with your letter; very obligingly intended to give me previous notice of your journey; but which, by the iniquity of chance, tended only to acquaint me with an opportunity which I had *loſt*.

THERE is nothing could have been ſo fortunate as your journey to London, had Mr. H— thought proper to bring your letter in due time.—What excuſe he made for his neglect, or whether he made any, I have really forgot. This I know, that the whole affair has been unlucky. There has been abundant time for conſultation, and a perfect ſeries of opportunities of which we have not been ſuffered to avail ourſelves.—It is now three weeks or a month

ſince

ſince I corrected the proof-ſheets; was ſo hurried in the doing of it that I ſcarce knew what I wrote; and yet, in ſpite of all this hurry, the book is hitherto unpubliſhed. *Now*, indeed, it muſt be much too late for alterations, as D— has given me ſome room to expect a book this very day.—I know but little what he has done in conſequence of that diſcretionary power with which I, through haſte, was obliged to intruſt him: but in what I have done, *myſelf*, you may expect to find all the effects of *dulneſs precipitated*.

It is now the twenty-third of February, and I have received no freſh account of our friend Dodſley's proceedings; nor am I able to *trace* them, as I expected, in the news-papers.

As to your ſhare of this Miſcellany, you can have no cauſe to be diſſatisfied.—After what manner he has thought proper to print Lady L—'s verſes, I am a good deal uncertain; but I apprehend he has not followed her own readings very preciſely, and that the blame thereof is to be thrown upon me.—I am concerned for the memory of my poor friend Whiſtler; and regret that his *better* pieces did not fall into my hands. I think that Dodſley, however, would have done him greater juſtice, had he inſerted his

his tranſlation of "Horace and Lydia." It is true, the tranſlations of that Ode are out of number; but *his*, if I miſtake not, had many beauties of its own.—I do not know whether I ever hinted to you, that *his* genius and that of Ovid were apparently congenial.—Had he cultivated his with equal care, perhaps the ſimilitude had been as obvious as that of your twin-daughters. — Mr. Graves has one ſmall well-poliſhed gem in this collection; his verſes upon Medals.—His little conjugal Love-ſong is alſo natural and eaſy.—I *told* you what I leaſt diſliked of my *own* puerilities.—If the printing of my Rural Inſcriptions be *invidious*, it was altogether owing to the inſtigation of Sir G— L—. There are four or five little matters, which, if he have printed with my name, incorrect as they are, I ſhall be utterly diſconſolate; at leaſt, till I get ſight of a ſucceeding impreſſion.—For though I am not much ſolicitous about a poetical reputation (and indeed it is of little importance to ſo *domeſtic* an animal as myſelf), yet I could ill endure to paſs for an affected, powerleſs *pretender*.

And now no more upon the ſubject.—I have nothing to add that can the leaſt amuſe you.—You, who have been converſant with all the buſy and the ſplendid ſcenes of life, can want no materials to make a letter entertaining.—Indeed

you never *did*. — I ſhall be glad, however, to receive a *long* one, upon what ſubjects you pleaſe.

I HAVE paſſed a very dull and unamuſive winter; my health indeed rather better than I experienced it laſt year; but my head *as* confuſed, and my ſpirits *as* low. I live in hopes of an opportunity of ſeeing you at Harbury; but I begin now to receive viſits as an honeſt beggar does an alms, with my humbleſt thanks for the favour, and with a deſpair of making a return.

PERHAPS my next letter may diſcover ſomewhat more *reſolution*: inclination I never want; being at all times with ſingular affection yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXIV. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
April 3, 1755.

Dear Mr. Jago,

I HAVE ſo long expected the favour of a few lines from you, that I begin at laſt to queſtion whether you received the letter I ſent you. It was incloſed in one to Mr. M——,

whom I requeſted to further it with all convenient expedition. I am neither able to recollect the whole contents of it; nor indeed, if I *were*, could I endure the thoughts of tranſcribing them. The chief intention of it, however, was to acquaint you of Mr. H—'s unhappy delay in the delivery of that letter with which you favoured me from Radway.

WHAT confirms me in a ſuſpicion that my laſt letter miſcarried, is, that Mr. Wren lately acquainted me of your being at Wroxall upon buſineſs, and of your making ſome ſlight mention of Mr. Dodſley's publication, without intimating that you diſcovered any deſign you had of writing to me. This is mere preamble and ſtuff: implying nothing more than the deſire I have to *hear* from you, when it ought alſo to expreſs how impatiently I long to *ſee* you. Worldly concerns and my winterly ſtate of health have detained me at home for theſe many months paſt: worldly concerns may have confined you likewiſe; but as your health and ſpirits are univerſally better than mine, and as you have much leſs diſlike to travelling than myſelf, I would hope that my abſence from Harbury will never cauſe you to *neglect* any *opportunity* of coming hither. For my own part, I have been meditating upon a viſit to you all this winter;

winter; and do, at this time, reſolve moſt ſtrenuouſly to perform it before June. But the many ſuch ſchemes of pleaſure in which I have been diſappointed are a ſort of check upon my expreſſions, and make me promiſe with *fear*. As to Dodſley's performance, which you muſt have received before this time, I will make no obſervations till I have the pleaſure of ſeeing you: and yet there are many points I would diſcuſs, and many accounts I want to give you. So many indeed, that they would furniſh out perhaps a ſuperficial drawling letter; but would ſerve infinitely better for converſation, with the book before us. The volume, I am told, is well received in town; though political intelligence muſt engroſs much of its preſent attention.

Mr. Hylton is in my neighbourhood, and upon the point of ſettling at his farm. Could you poſſibly ſpend a week with us, we would try to make it agreeable. At all events, I beg to hear from you; and that, not merely as it will afford me great pleaſure, but as, at the ſame time, it will eaſe me of ſome ſolicitude. I will not make this a long letter, though I wiſh to receive a long one in return; having a head very little qualified to add any thing that may amuſe you, though a heart very ſincerely and affectionately at your ſervice.

W. Shenſtone.

LXXXV. To the same.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Dec. 14, 1756.

THOUGH the silence that has prevailed for so long a time betwixt us be, I fear, to be placed to *my* account, yet do I by no means imagine, that you will desire me to fill half this letter with apologies. Suffice it, that I owe all the world, at this time, either letters, visits, or money: yet that my *heart* is as well disposed in each of these respects, as that of any one person who is insolvent. The regard indeed that I owe to you has been a troublesome inmate within my bosom for some time past; making daily remonstrances against the injustice which I have done it; and urging me strenuously to take horse, and make my *personal* apologies at Harbury.——I return you many thanks for Mr. S——'s company, and for the sight of the manuscript which he shewed me. Alas! that I cannot spare money to drain and to improve my lands, or to put almost any part of his excellent rules in execution! and yet that Mr. Childe of Kinlett (hearing my place always termed a farm) should come expecting to find all things managed here according to the perfection of *husbandry!* As little *can* I pretend to improve

Mr.

Mr. S——'s treatise, as his treatise *will* my farm: no farther at *most*, than in what regards the *stile*, or *plan* of his performance. Yet could I wish to see both *it* and *him* again before he prints it; wishing him all the success which his very *endeavour* deserves. Assuredly the present is not the *time* for his publication: more *immediate* remedies than can be derived from agriculture are become absolutely requisite to relieve the sufferings of this nation.—I should be extremely well-pleased to visit you at Harbury, but cannot even propose to myself that happiness at *present*; and were I even to *promise*, have but too much reason to know the *uncertainty* of my *performance*. Yet am I sensible enough we *ought to meet*, if we purpose that what we print should have the advantage of our mutual criticisms. Let me then *conjure* you to come over, at your convenience, for a few days, that we may agree at least upon some *general* points, and make no worse a figure in the future Miscellany, than we have done in the foregoing *.—But I have really more things to *say* than I will pretend to *scrawl* upon *paper*; nor can I endure to retail a few particulars, while I am impatient to communicate the whole.

Let me acquaint you while I remember, that there is at this time a Mr. Duncombe and his

* See the Edinburgh Review, N° I.

ſon, clergymen, that are publiſhing a new tranſlation of Horace. Whatever you may think of their *ſucceſs*, after *Francis*, I believe I may pronounce them men of real merit, and in no wiſe deſtitute of learning or genius. They have requeſted me to communicate any *verſion* or *imitation* that I can furniſh, either of my own or of any friends; wherefore, if you *have* any thing of this ſort, I ſhould be glad if you would put it in my power to oblige them. The ſon has an "Ode to Health" in the fourth volume of Dodſley's Miſcellany.

UNDER the head of intelligence, I have mighty little to convey. — The houſe at Hagley is, in a manner, finiſhed, ſo far as concerns the ſhell; and wants nothing beſides a portico to be as compleat as moſt in England. — Pray remember me to Mr. Talbot, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Holbeach; ſhould they call upon me next year, they will find my place better worth their notice.

I AM, and *have* been ever, cordially and moſt affectionately,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, with ſome Account of Politics and Poetry.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, April 4, 1755.

YOU will be harraſſed with my letters till you condemn my exceſſive leiſure as loudly as I have lamented that you ſhould ever feel the *want* of it. Nor is it a point ſo eaſily decided *which* of us may be the greater *ſufferer*; you through my *officiouſneſs*, or I by your long *ſilence*. Yet the partiality which you have ever ſhewn me will, I think, diſpoſe you to receive my letters more patiently than it is in my power to ſuſtain the loſs of *yours*. After all, I ſhould not write at preſent, but that the Miſcellanies, with which Dodſley compliments us, arrived laſt week at The Leaſowes. I deſire therefore you would acquaint me, whether the ſett that he means for you ſhould remain here till your arrival; or if you chuſe that I ſhould ſend it by the Birmingham-ſtage to Bath. Having made this enquiry, I was thinking to conclude; but cannot reconcile myſelf to the *novelty* of ſending *you* three empty pages. The Parliament will riſe too ſoon for the publication of my "Rural Elegance;" and having performed my

promiſe to Dodſley, I think no more about ſuch *laurels* as the *public* can beſtow upon me, but am giving all my attention to ſuch as I can purchaſe of my nurſery-man. I wiſh, however, that the volume may recompence Dodſley for his trouble: I may alſo add, for his ingenuity, and for his politeneſs in giving each of us a compleat ſett. They are elegantly bound, and all as much alike as poſſible.

The preſent criſis of ſtate-affairs does not ſeem to favour his publication, as the attention of the public muſt lean greatly to that quarter. I ſaw a letter from Sir William M—— (who correſponds with Lady Luxborough), which placed the ſtruggles of the miniſtry in a clearer light than they had yet appeared to me. It ſeems that perſons of all denominations are for carrying on the war with vigour; and the King's application for a Vote of Credit was received with general approbation. The zeal of the Parliament was indeed ſo remarkable on this occaſion, that, inſtead of the 600,000 *l.* at firſt intended, it was thought proper to propoſe a million. But the ſervices were aſcertained, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer made accountable for the application of it. The augmentation of the fleet with 20,000 ſeamen; the raiſing 5000 marines on a plan of dividing them into ſmall companies,

companies, which will render them more useful both by sea and land; the completion and reinforcement of the Irish regiments; are the uses to which this million is to be appropriated. Mr. Fox and his land-war-party sat mute, whilst Mr. Legge with great openness and perspicuity explained the present schemes; as they were calculated, to exert our whole strength at sea, and, if possible, no where else. Mr. Dodington, who, it seems, has not spoke of many years, charmed every body. His wit did not only entertain, but animate and affect his hearers. "*It* "*were better*, he said, *than lose the dominion of* "*the Ocean, that the Ocean should overwhelm us:* "*for what Briton could wish to leave a posterity* "*crawling upon this island, only to feel the ty-* "*ranny, and swell the victories, of France?*" It seems, F—, in his opposition to the Duke of Newcastle, is supported by the Duke of Cumberland, his army, and the Scotch: that the ministry (or the D. of N—'s party) seem not displeased with a prospect of uniting with the Tories, who now hold the balance; and it seems the Tories, by Sir William's letter, are as little dispeased to unite with the Ministry.

You will guess that good part of this political account is *transcribed*; and you will guess aright. I had some thoughts that it might amuse

amuſe you, and had no occaſion to uſe other expreſſions.—Let me now, once more, return to the futile objects of my *own* amuſement. The impreſſion upon this letter will be taken from my new ſeal. The motto that I have pitched upon is, SVPEREST MEMORIA: though I yet retain ſome hankering after the ſingle word PRAETERITIS. Probably this, however, is not the laſt ſeal that I ſhall cauſe this man to cut in ſteel. The altar is not yet finiſhed: ANTE OMNIA MVSAE; but it does not quite ſatisfy me.—I will incloſe the two laſt letters I received from Mr. Dodſley; but you muſt not think I build too much upon any compliment which he there makes me.—It is true, I think him a very ſincere man; but he cannot have been converſant ſo long with modern-writers, but he muſt conjecture, when their piece is publiſhed, that they a little hunger for applauſe. I am now uncertain whether you will receive a letter from him; as he has, unaccountably I think, ſent your books *hither*, and not to Bath. I am, however, fully ſatisfied, that your firſt and laſt pieces, more *eſpecially*, do credit to his collection, and muſt pleaſe all perſons of taſte.

I DESIRE my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Graves, who will be pleaſed to ſee the affection that ſubſiſts betwixt you perpetuated. She will alſo feel

feel ſome ſatisfaction in the profeſſions of friendſhip that are made you by your moſt affectionate and faithful humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXVII. To the ſame, with a Recommendation of Mr. Dodſley to his Acquaintance.

From Mr. Baſkerville's, Birmingham, July 27, 1756.

Dear Mr. Graves,

IT were needleſs for me to recommend to you a perſon whom you ſo truly eſteem as Mr. Dodſley; and from whom you will gladly receive a viſit, not more upon *my* account, than upon *his* and your *own*.—All I beg is, that, conſidering the ſhortneſs of his time at Bath, you will be acquainted with him at firſt ſight; which, I think, ſhould ever be a maxim with perſons of genius and humanity. — He has made a few days extremely agreeable to me at The Leaſowes; has been ſhewing me his new Tragedy, which I wiſhed you alſo might peruſe. If I be not unaccountably impoſed upon by my friendſhip for the writer, the extraordinary merit of this performance is altogether unqueſtionable.

queſtionable.—I will not inform you through what hands it has paſſed in town; becauſe I would have you communicate your ſentiments to him with entire freedom, being aſſured the delicacy of them may *yet* be of ſervice, and that the openneſs with which you communicate them will be infinitely pleaſing to Mr. Dodſley. He has done me the honour to aſk me for an epilogue:—I *wiſh*, but *fear* to undertake it.—Should any lucky hint occur to *you*, I well know how much you are able to manage it to advantage. In that caſe, I would beg a line from you the firſt opportunity.—What talk I of a line from you, who am, at this very time, many letters and apologies in your debt? but I cannot add many ſyllables to the letter I am writing.—I will write again in a few days. Mean time, my compliments to Mrs. Graves; and remember, that Mr. Dodſley and you become well acquainted at firſt ſight.

I am ever, dear Mr. Graves,

Your moſt affectionate humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXVIII. To

LXXXVIII. To the ſame, on Mr. Dodſley and his Works.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Mar. 7, 1757.

I HAVE paſſed a very dull and unamuſive winter here—the worſe, for being neither *diſpoſed* nor *qualified* to keep up a correſpondence with my friends: with *you*, among the *chief*; and yet, it is upon you that I muſt depend to make up my deficiencies with Mr. Dodſley.—The poor man has been afflicted with the moſt *laſting* fit of the gout he ever underwent before.—His patience, on theſe occaſions, is inimitable. His excurſion to the *Regions of Terror and Pity* is not the only inſtance of his ability to compoſe verſes in the midſt of pain. When he ſent me a copy of it, he let me know, that he had tranſmitted another to you by the ſame poſt. I ſhould be glad to receive your remarks upon it, ere I communicate my own. I have, for ſome weeks paſt, found my head ſo terribly confuſed, that it has been with difficulty I could *think* or *expreſs* myſelf on the moſt ſuperficial topic. I hope, in a little time, to be able to examine it more attentively than I can at preſent: yet, in the mean while, muſt acknowledge,

knowledge, that I think his subject capable of furnishing extraordinary beauties for an Ode: and *such*, I think, he should *call* it; dropping the narrative parts, and the connexions as much as possible. I cannot wish him to print it without very *material* alterations; and what would occasion almost the same trouble as it would require to *new-write* it. I do not mean this as a condemnation of what he has already done; so much, as a proof of my opinion how much he will be able to improve it. *After all*, it will scarce affect me half so much as his Tragedy. He is so *honest* a man, that the work he has to give the world is much better than the specimen: or, to borrow an idea from *my situation*, the grain that he has to deliver will prove much better than the sample. It is with shame I acknowledge I have not yet sent him his epilogue; and I feel the greater compunction of mind upon this score, as it is possible he may impute my neglect to Garrick's refusal of his play. This weighs nothing with you or me; a thousand motives may affect a manager, that have little or nothing to do with the merit of the performance; yet he may so far thank Mr. Garrick, that whatever his refusal takes from the *reputation* of his Tragedy, it will, through Dodsley's industry, add apparently to its value. I have not yet been able to satisfy myself with

every

every part of your epilogue, and muſt either omit ſending it at preſent, or muſt ſend him an imperfect copy. If you write to him, let me beg you to give the moſt favourable account you *can* of me.

SOMEBODY acquainted me (I think it was Mr. Talbot), that your old friend Ballard had bequeathed you his coins for a legacy. I was truly glad to hear it; but have wondered ſince, that you never once informed me of ſo conſiderable an acquiſition.

I REMEMBER a poem of yours, called ——, upon the preſent taſte in gardening; which you will not wonder if my late employments make me wiſh once more to ſee. Be ſo kind as to ſend me a copy of this, as well as of any other little pieces that you have in your bureau. Some of yours deſerve a better place than what is aſſigned them in the Magazine. In particular, I remember that upon Enigmas, and Mopſy. Be aſſured, I will make no *uſe* of *any* without your previous conſent. You know, I ſuppoſe, that Dodſley's other Miſcellanies do not appear before next winter.—I received from him, togegether with his Ode, a few Elegies publiſhed by Mr. Whitehead. They are, I think, worth your peruſal; and deſigned by my worthy friend to excite my emulation.—Alas! that I am ſo ill able

to

to deſerve the encouragements which I receive from him!

My neighbour Baſkerville, at the cloſe of this month, publiſhes his fine edition of Virgil. It will, for *type* and *paper*, be a perfect curioſity. He follows the Cambridge edition.

What think you of their management in regard to Mr. Byng? I cannot help thinking the King ſhould *pardon* him. The Court-martial, by acquitting him of cowardice or diſaffection, have left no *motive* for his *negligence*, beſide an *error of his judgement:* for we *cannot* impute it to *ſupineneſs*, *indifference*, or *inattention*. And then to ſentence a man for error, is to expect infallibility. That twelfth article of war is moſt undoubtedly ill-expreſſed.—Pray do not forget my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Graves.—Let me hear from you ſoon, and believe me ever

Yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXXXIX. To

LXXXIX. On the same.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, April 8, 1757.

WHAT remarks I had to make upon our friend Dodsley's Ode, I sent him the last post. I would gladly have occasioned them to pass by Claverton; but, having delayed them so long, I was impatient to convince him that I had not *wholly* disregarded his request. They are indeed pretty copious; and yet I have reserved to myself the privilege of re-criticising when I see his altered copy. I recommended to him the addition which you proposed, and some others; and if he will but take the pains that I have chalked out for him, I doubt not that he will render it an excellent Ode, though he may not find it a very *popular* one. I have also sent him a copy of our epilogue, not much different from what you saw; to these I added my little Ode on Lady Luxborough's furnishing her library, and Perry's Verses upon the Malvern-waters. At the close of these last, there appears (with Perry's approbation), a short address to Dr. Wall of Worcester; a very eminent physician, and the patron of this mineral, who has promoted a subscription in the county

towards *building*, near this well, for the accommodation of ſtrangers.

I PURPOSE alſo to give Dodſley the little Ode I incloſe, and would beg the favour of you to adviſe me concerning the additional ſtanzas, fix the readings in the reſt, and to return me the copy.

I COME now to analyze your remark on Ballard's legacy; which is indeed very ingenious, but will ſcarce bear examination: nor do I think that you rather wiſh to have *found* that ſet of medals, than to have them *given* you by a deceaſed friend. Aſſuredly, if we do not allow pleaſure to be *predominant* in this kind of melancholy, we deſtroy the foundation of all tragic or elegiac writings. Melpomene has no place amongſt the Muſes; and the pains that we have taken with our friend Dodſley's penſive Ode have been employed to no purpoſe. But you want not theſe pedantic flouriſhes, and are wholly of my mind.

MARTIN'S Magazine is, I believe, pretty obſcure; and I wonder where you got a ſight of it. It was, however, fortunate enough for *me* that you gave no copy of "James Dawſon." I never yet ſaw your verſes *on that Grotto*, or

from

from *Phædrus*, and I want to see your W— once more, concerning which you are silent. Your "Pepper-box" and "Mopsy" might, I think, appear in Dodsley's Miscellany, either *with* or *without* your name. I also want a copy of your verses upon Riddles; and whenever you have a leisure hour, should be glad if you would look them out and send them.

Go, and think yourself an happy man; at least, if your children be recovered, as I am inclined to think they are; and give my service to Mrs. Graves, for the happiness that she occasions you; of which I cannot but partake, being, with constant and sincere affection, your most obliged humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XC. On the same.

Dear Mr. Graves, About 1757.

DO you know my hand-writing?—It is really such a length of time since you had demands upon me for letters, that I am hardly able to enumerate the several causes of my neglect.

lect. *This* I know, that ſcarce a day has paſſed, during this interval of ſilence, in which I have not *remembered* you with the moſt affectionate eſteem.—I *hope* you correſpond with our friend Dodſley; and that it is not altogether diſagreeable to you, to find he is printing ſome of your verſes. He has many, alas! *too* many, of mine; which I ſuffered him to take away in ſummer, and which the ſtate of my winter health and ſpirits renders me but ill able to reviſe. I believe, I am, even now, the principal cauſe that his two volumes remain yet unpubliſhed; nor can I expreſs the pain it gives me, to be thus detrimental to his intereſts; and to delay the publication of ſo much better pieces than my own. I am alſo diſſatisfied upon *another ſcore*: I mean, that I have been wanting to myſelf, in not aſking the benefit of your advice; which I have heretofore experienced to be at once ſo *comfortable* and ſo *advantageous*; but although the ſcheme was projected in ſummer, the buſineſs of correction was (by *me* at leaſt) deferred till winter, and then I had neither ſpirits to *correct* or to *correſpond*.

I AM as really as much obliged to you for the pains which you took on my behalf in London, as though the *ſubject* of your enquiry were a thing of more *importance* to me; but, indeed,

indeed, you can hardly conceive how indifferent I am now grown, not only as to articles of *that sort*, but to aught that regards external ſplendour.

I REALLY have not time to enter upon the merits of inoculation; but am very ſure that Mrs. G—'s danger was enough to influence *your* determination. I am heartily glad to hear of her recovery; and can but look upon the weeks which I purpoſe to paſs ſome time hereafter with you at Claverton, as the moſt agreeable of any that belong to the remainder of my life. I am ſenſible, that if I *coveted* to *ſhine* in poetry, I ſhould loſe no time in viſiting public places; but my wiſhes of that ſort are moſt extremely limited; and I ſhall viſit *you* on the account of *friendſhip*; that is (paſt all doubt), on a much *better principle*.

I HAVE *long* meant to write to you, and have accordingly given *ſome* anſwer to moſt parts of your laſt letter. Nevertheleſs, the occaſion of this preſent letter is quite of another kind.—A young painter of my acquaintance is adviſed to go to Bath; has a recommendation to the Biſhop of B—, who will introduce him to the Duke of N—. And though I cannot ſo eaſily bring him acquainted with nobles or prime-

miniſters, I can give him directions to my friend, who, in point of taſte, is their ſuperior. The perſon then, who, I ſuppoſe, will be the bearer of this letter, has, by dint of mere ingenuity, riſen to a conſiderable eminence in fruit-pieces, &c. He has been employed by Lord Lyttelton, and is much admired at Oxford: for my own part, I believe you will think he is in few reſpects inferior to, and has (if I am not miſtaken) ſome advantages of, Stranover; but you will ſee his pieces. All I have to ſay further on the occaſion is, that he is a native of our pariſh, and a particular friend of *mine*; and if it were in your power to promote his intereſt at Bath, you would not only highly gratify *me*; but at the ſame time do a ſervice to one of the leaſt aſſuming, moſt ingenious, and moſt amiable men I know.—I beg my beſt reſpects to your family, and am, dear Mr. Graves, moſt affectionately

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCI. On

XCI. On the same.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, May 30, 1758.

I THANK God, I have recovered a tolerable degree of health this spring; though by no means free from so much heaviness and lassitude, as renders me averse to all activity of body and mind. In the course of my disorder, so long as I could bear to think of *any* sublunary enjoyment, I remembered my friends, and of course thought much of *you*; but its advances were so precipitate, when I sent for the physicians, that I soon received a *wrench* from every object of this world: and it was by slow degrees, even after my recovery, that my mind took so much root again, as appears necessary for its immediate support. I suppose you have been informed that my fever was in great measure hypochondriacal; and left my nerves so extremely sensible, that, even on no very interesting subject, I could readily think myself into a vertigo: I had almost said an epilepsy; for surely I was oftentimes near it.—It became, therefore, expedient for my recovery, to amuse myself with a succession of the most trivial objects I could find; and this kind of carelessness I have indulged till it is grown into an habit.

Even letters to my friends are hardly consistent with my rule of health; yet I could be no longer silent with regard to *you*, without feeling a sensation that would hurt me *more*. This may fairly enough be termed the first *letter* I have wrote since my recovery; wherein if I should tell you one half that I am inclined to do, relating to this dreadful illness, what room should I then leave to speak on any other subject? I must, therefore, tell these things by word of mouth, or write them some other time. The journies which my friends, and indeed physicians, propose for me, are what certainly bid fairest for the completion of my cure: yet there are many, many things, which, however unfit for the task, I must endeavour to adjust before I can leave home, with any possibility of enjoyment. Need I mention any other than my cursed embarrassment with D—? who, during my *danger*, was induced to stop proceedings; but is now beginning law afresh, and, by the removal of tenants from *his* share of the Harborough estate, has now wriggled himself into possession of almost one half of *mine*. However, I am not without hopes of seeing all terminated in a little time; nor entirely without a prospect of seeing you at Claverton this summer. That you may think this the more probable, I am pressed by two young gentlemen, whom

whom I very much esteem, to accompany them on a visit to Mr. Bamfylde in Somersetshire. These two gentlemen are Mr. Dean and Mr. Knight. Perhaps you may have heard of Mr. Bamfylde, who is very much at Bath; is there now with his lady, or has left the place but lately; and whose fortune, person, figure, and accomplishments, can hardly leave him long unnoticed in any place where he resides. Yet my visit to Estercomb must be of secondary consequence to me, whilst you live by the road-side. I am much obliged to you for your compliment on my Poematia in Dodsley's Miscellanies; which came very seasonably, considering how I had been mortified by the first sight of what was done. To speak the truth, there are many things appear there very contrary to my intentions; but which I am more desirous may be attributed to the unseasonableness of my fever, than to my friend D—'s precipitation. My purpose was to acknowledge as *mine*, none of the pieces which now follow the longer Ode to Lady Luxborough. Her name was actually erased; as also my own at the close of your Fable. The verses by Mrs. Bennet to Mr. Richardson were absolutely new to me; where my name occurs again. All this is against me; as a thing in itself invidious to have one's name recur so often, and as my *own lines contradict* the merit

merit which my friends so liberally allow me.—The verses of mine in the sixth volume (which was printed before the fifth) were printed without my knowledge; and when I sent up an improved copy, it arrived a good deal too late. As things happen, I am made to own several things of inferior merit to those which I *do not* own.—All this is against me; but my thoughts are avocated from this edition, and wholly fixed upon a future; wherein, I hope, Dodsley will be prevailed upon to omit some things also from *other* hands which discredit his collection: and, to balance *all my discomforts* on this head, the world will know that I am esteemed by a person, whom I esteem so much as you.—I know not how it happens, but the taste for humorous poetry does not prevail at this time: yet I cannot agree with Mr. J. Warton, that it is no poetry *at all*, any more than that a good representation of Dutch boors is not a picture.—His brother, the Professor, is to be here with his pupil Lord Donnegal, &c. this summer.—Mr. Spence and Mr. Dodsley will stay a day or two here this month in their way to Scotland; and Mr. Home, the author of Douglas, &c. called on me, and we spent an evening together at Admiral Smith's. Thus my *ferme ornée* procures me interviews with persons whom it might otherwise be my *wish*, rather than my good

fortune to see. Would to God, it could attract *you*, whom I more long to see than any one! and let me tell you, there were considerable additions made to it last year: Dodsley's present of Faunus; a new Gothic-building, or rather a skreen, which cost ten pounds; and the ruins of a Priory, which, however, make a tenant's house, that pays me tolerable poundage.—I am growing a little into *your* taste, why should not you advance farther into *mine?* I mean, I have a love for medals, by means of some that have been given me: yet do not think that I shall ever rival *you*.—My object is only *beauty*, and I love only those of exquisite workmanship: so that this is no more a rivalship than that of two persons who admire the sex, but love different individuals; a rivalship, which, I trust, is more likely to cement our friendship than disunite us; which it is my *conviction* and my *comfort* no *sort* of rivalship will ever do. I have hardly room to express my good wishes for long health and happiness to Mrs. Graves and your little family, and to subscribe myself, my dear friend,

Your ever affectionate humble servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCII. On

XCII. On the same.

Dear Mr. Graves, July 22, 1758.

IT gives me great anxiety when I reflect how long I have waited for the satisfaction of a line from you. I beg, if you are alive and well, you will let me know so by the next post.

MR. Dodsley and Mr. Spence have been here and stayed a week with me. The former was in certain hopes of seeing you in town; but I do not find that he either saw or heard from you, which *adds* to my anxiety.

I HAVE seen few whom I liked so much, upon so little acquaintance, as Mr. Spence; extremely polite, friendly, chearful, and master of an infinite fund of subjects for agreeable conversation. Had my affairs permitted me, they had certainly drawn me with them into Scotland; whither they are gone, for about a month, upon a journey of curiosity.

I BELIEVE it will give you pleasure to hear that my law-suit with D— is accommodated, by the generous interposition of my Lord Stamford; concerning whose benevolence and magnanimity

it

it is impoſſible for me to ſpeak in the terms which they deſerve. It is ended, I hope, not very *diſadvantageouſly* for me; apparently with *one* advantage, of being intirely exculpated in the opinion of all mankind. The common method (as M. Bruyere obſerves) is to condemn *both* on theſe occaſions.—This ſuits people's indolence, and favours their impartiality.—And though the equitableneſs of my whole conduct in this affair was ſelf-evident to all that were near me, yet I found many that were inclined to blame us *both*, and *ſome* that I could never convince till *now* that the fault was not *wholly* mine.

YOUR "Pepper-box and Salt-ſeller" are in one of the Chronicles.—They pillage Dodſley's two laſt volumes of all that is worth peruſal.—I ſurely have ſome friend amongſt the writers of the Monthly Review; for I have not only eſcaped a flogging, but am treated with great civility.

I NEVER know how to leave off, when I begin writing to you, having always a great deal to ſay. I only purpoſed you a few lines, to deſire you would write directly. Pray make my beſt compliments to Mrs. Graves, and believe me ever yours moſt invariably.

W. SHENSTONE.

XCIII. To

XCIII. To the same, containing an Account of his Excursions and Amusements.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 25, 1758.

I HAVE had daily expectations of a line from you these two months; conscious, however, that I did not deserve any; and affording a manifest instance of the infatuations of self-love. The last letter that I received of yours is dated the close of July, since which time I have been chiefly engaged in my customary amusements; embellishing my farm, and receiving the company that came to see it. My principal *excursions* have been to Enville, on Lord Grey's birth-day; to Lord Ward's, upon another invitation; and to the Worcester Music-meeting. I need not mention what an appearance there was of company at Worcester; dazzling enough, you may suppose, to a person who, like me, has not seen a public place these ten years. Yet I made a shift to enjoy the splendour, as well as the music that was prepared for us. I presume, nothing in the way of harmony can possibly go further than the Oratorio of The Messiah. It seems the best composer's best composition. Yet I fancied I could observe

some

ſome parts in it, wherein Handel's judgement failed him; where the muſic was not equal, or was even *oppoſite*, to what the words required. Very many of the nobleſſe, whom I had ſeen at The Leaſowes, were as complaiſant to me as poſſible; whereas it was my *former* fate, in public places, to be as little regarded as a journeyman ſhoe-maker.—There I firſt ſaw our preſent Biſhop; alſo our late Biſhop's monument, which is fine.—Laſtly, there I firſt ſaw my Lady Coventry; to whom, I believe, one muſt allow all that the world allows in point of beauty.—She is certainly the moſt *unexceptionable* figure of a woman I ever ſaw; and made moſt of the ladies there ſeem of almoſt another *ſpecies*. On the whole, I was not a little pleaſed that I had made this excurſion; and returned with double reliſh to the *enjoyment* of my *farm*. It is now high time to take ſome notice of your obliging letter.—I think I was not told the purport of the journey you made to London; ſo can only ſay, I am very ſorry for the aggravating circumſtances of your diſappointment; and hope, long before this time, that Mrs. Graves is quite recovered.—Did I forget to make your excuſes to Dodſley or no?—he was here (as I remember) ſoon after, with Mr. Spence, in their way to Scotland.—Mr. Spence, the man *you* would like, and who would like *you*

of

of all mankind. He took my Elegies into Scotland, and ſent them back on his return, with a ſheet or two of criticiſms, and an handſome letter.—How much am I intereſted in the preſervation of his friendſhip!—and yet ſuch is my *deſtiny* (for I can give it no other name), I have never wrote to him *ſince*. This *impartiality* of my neglect, you muſt accept *yourſelf* as *ſome* apology: but to proceed; Mr. Spence choſe himſelf an oak here for a ſeat, which I have inſcribed to him,

(" SPENCE'S OAK.)

" EXIMIO. NOSTRO. CRITONI.
" CVI. DICARI. * VELLET.
" MVSARVM. OMNIVM. ET. GRATIARVM. CHORVS.
" DICAT. AMICITIA."

I ABSOLUTELY *forgot* to talk to Dodſley about your ——, and I am vexed; becauſe I could, with a ſafe conſcience, have raiſed his idea of your abilities.—However, it is not too late, even if you care to publiſh it this winter.—His play comes on (I fancy, *this very night*) at Covent-garden. What he ſays in behalf of this ſtep is, that there was no glimpſe of probability, that Garrick would ever admit it at the other houſe †.—

* Subintellige SEDEM ISTAM (hanc).

† He ſays, the players liked it, and ſeemed inclined to take pains with it.

Mrs.

Mrs: Bellamy is his Cleone, and ſpeaks the epilogue, of which more anon. I ſuppoſe he acts by Lord Cheſterfield's opinion: for I know, when he was going to print it (ſince he came home) with a *proper* dedication to Mr. Garrick, my Lord then prevented him, telling him, it *would* be acted one day or other.—Did I ever ſend you a copy of the epilogue, with all the additions and alterations? Dodſley firſt liked, then diſliked it, and laſtly liked it again; only deſiring me to ſoften the ſatire, ſhorten the whole (for it was upwards of ſixty lines), and add a complimentary cloſe to the *boxes*.—All this I have endeavoured, and ſent it him laſt Monday.—*You* would not care to own it: and he would fain have *me*; but I think neither of us ſhould run the riſque, where ſo little honour is to be acquired; yet Mr. Melmoth's name to the prologue is an inducement.—I was very near ſurprizing you at Claverton this autumn, with my friend young Knight, in his way to Mr. Bamfyld's; but he goes *again* in ſpring, and I ſhall certainly accompany him; I have *beſpoke*, but not yet *procured* any, horſes for my chaiſe. It is a neat one, you will find; and I have made two or three excurſions in it.—I ſaw Mr. Patchen's Topographical Letters ſoon after they were publiſhed.—If you continue to me the honour of a ſhield in your Gothic

alcove, the field should be either "Or, three "King-fishers proper," or, with the addition of a chief gules, three trefoils argent—no bar, cheveron bend, &c.—More of this when I write again.—Motto FLVMINA AMEM, SYLVASQVE INGLORIVS—RVRA MIHI.

I CANNOT recollect my company of the season, to tell it you.—Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Litchfield, and Mr. Sheldon, were here together in the beginning of the autumn; and I have strong invitations to visit them.—I have a very genteel letter from Sir Francis, offering me gold-fishes; and I have a double inducement to visit Mr. Sheldon, as he lives near Mickleton, and is the most agreeable man alive.—Your acquaintance Lord W— dined and spent good part of a day with me.—Under a sort of gloomy appearance, a man of admirable sense and some humour.—I put him in mind of you, and the remarkable monument at Cambden.—Mr. Thomas Warton was also here with Lord Donnegal, and has since sent me his "Inscriptions," which are rather too simple, even for my taste.—Bishop of Worcester with his family and company—Lord Willoughby—Lord Foley.—I mention Lord Foley the rather, because I shall call on your friend Dr. Charleton (who was also here) to pass a day or two with me at Whitley.—I shall pass also a day or

two

two at our Biſhop's, whom I met ſince at Enville. Theſe two (*propoſe* what I *will* beſides) will probably be the principal, or only excurſions that I ſhall make this winter.—God ſend it may no more affect my health than it has hitherto done.—I am at preſent tolerably well, and live more temperately than before.—Would to God you could come over; go with me to Dr. Charleton's, and Lord Foley's, and Lord Stamford's, and paſs a week here! I would meet you with my chaiſe at Worceſter, or even farther. I have finiſhed a building oppoſite to the new ſtable, which I think you ſaw.—They together give my houſe a degree of ſplendour. Did you ſee my priory?—a tenant's houſe, one room whereof is to have Gothic ſhields round the cornice.—I am in ſome doubt whether to make it an Houſe of Lords or Houſe of Commons; if the former, my private friends will have ſhields round my Gothic bed-chamber.—The wretch is curſed that *begins* a letter with no better a pen than I *finiſh* one with. My dear friend, write directly a long letter.—Keep me alive in the memory of Mrs. Graves, and believe me ever yours moſt affectionately,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCIV. To the same, in Expectation of a Visit.

Dear Mr. Graves, Christmas, 1758.

THERE *can* be nothing more welcome to me than the intelligence which you give of your intended visit at The Leasowes.—God knows how few of these interviews may for the future be allotted to us; and I should be glad at least to testify the joy which they afford me, by meeting you at Birmingham, or elsewhere within one day's journey for my chaise.—Pray be so good as to give me one more letter before you set out.—Very glad should I be to pay my respects to your brother at Mickleton, for whom I have the truest respect; but dare not give encouragement, for fear that aught should interfere.—I have ten thousand things to say to you; but will defer them, I think, *all*. I am positive your —— may be made *advantageous* to you by means of Dodsley; and even *reputable*, if you so please.—Will not Mrs. G— accompany you? pray convince her of my sincere regard.

I WANT to congratulate you on your escape from the small-pox, in a manner *different* from

your ordinary acquaintance; yet am not able to expreſs my ſentiments—gueſs the reſt; knowing, and ſufficiently knowing, that I am, with conſtancy and ardour, your moſt affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCV. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 6, 1759.

IF you knew the maxims on which I conduct myſelf, you might call me perhaps *unpolite*; but, I think, by no means *unfriendly*; I mean with reſpect to the *ordinary congratulations* on your *marriage*. Were you and I leſs intimate, leſs experienced, and leſs aſſured friends, it had been no venial omiſſion to have neglected ſuch a ceremony. Perhaps I ſhould not have neglected it; but as I have the ſatisfaction of believing that you would rejoice in any ſucceſs of mine, ſo I hope you would not diſtruſt my ſentiments upon any change of your condition which you yourſelf eſteemed for the *better*. I do indeed, my worthy friend, wiſh you much joy, both *now*, and at *all* times; and you will ever diſcern it

in my face, as often as fortune grants us an interview.—Mr. S— is a benevolent man, and I am sure would withhold no information that tended to *illustrate* our friendship on either side.

I HAVE thoughts of proceeding on to Harbury, whenever I come to Mr. Wren's: as I have long enough made my friend a promise; and intend ere long to do. Many reasons occur why I cannot set forward to-morrow morning: are these reasons substantial, or no other than the sly and sophistical insinuations of indolence?—surely the former.

DODSLEY, and indeed Mr. Spence, both expect me in town this February.—I fear it will not *be*; but if it *should*, how readily would I give notice, and become obliged to you for your company.

THOUGH I should have *expected* you would select a partner whose society you could enjoy, yet I was not a little satisfied with the hint given me in your letter, as well as in one I had before received from Mr. S—. It is not for such ladies as you and I esteem, that Mrs. * Bellamy's extraordinary lecture was intended; and a *lecture* it would have been with a vengeance, had

* See Epilogue to Cleone.

not

not D— omitted some thirty lines, and substituted about twelve or fourteen of his own. However, he is now going to print his fourth edition of it; in which the original epilogue will be restored, as well as considerable improvements introduced into his play. He sold two thousand of his first edition, the very first day he published it.

I HAVE so *much* to tell you, and of so *various* kinds, that I am afraid to expatiate upon *any* one article. Cannot you make a shift to call upon me, before *my public life* arrives?—I would send my chaise to meet you at any place you should appoint.

I HAVE passed my winter hitherto pretty chearfully amongst my books, in what I *call* my library. It now better deserves that name, by the form I have given it, and the volumes I have added.—Mr. S— would tell you something of my *other* occupations.

I COULD wish that you would favour me with a copy of your Essay on Electricity, and with any new copy of verses of your own, or of your friends.—Be not apprehensive: there shall nothing appear in print of your composition any more, without your explicit consent.—And yet I have thoughts of amusing myself with the

publication of a ſmall Miſcellany from neighbour Baſkerville's preſs, if I can ſave myſelf harmleſs as to expence.—I purpoſe it no larger than a "Lanſdown's," a "Philips's," or a "Pomfret's Poems."

HAVE you read my friend Dr. Grainger's Tibullus?—It affords you an elegant edition of a good tranſlation and of the text. He is engaged in a war with S—, and has juſt ſent me his pamphlet; which I could wiſh you to read, in order to form a judgement of S—'s character. Spence, I ſee, has adverti ſed his "Parallel betwixt Malliabecqui and his Taylor." It is merely a charitable deſign: and ſuch are now all Spence's views.

WHAT remains of my paper muſt be employed not in *mere* ceremony, although in ſomething that bears the form of it: in my beſt compliments to Mrs. Jago, and my offer, not indeed of a part of the friendſhip which I owe you, but rather of an equal quantity: in an aſſurance of the cordiality with which I ſhall rejoice to ſee both her and you; and in confirmation of that affection with which I have ever been, and am, my good friend, your moſt obedient ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCVI. TO

XCVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on their ſeveral Situations and Compoſitions.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, April 18, 1759.

YOU will think my ſilence long; and I ſhould be ſorry to *have* you quite regardleſs of it; although, I fear, it muſt be my fate to treſpaſs frequently upon your kind ſolicitude.—I have no excuſe to make, beſide ſome frivolous avocations, and *much* of that heavineſs and laſſitude which diſinclines one to write letters.—I paſſed the former part of winter with more vivacity than I did the latter, or even the incipient ſpring; owing, poſſibly, to theſe cold winds, which will not permit me to uſe my wonted exerciſe. You will laugh at the word *vivacity*, when applied to ſo dull an animal; but I ſpeak comparatively of that unmeaning drowſineſs which is my lot at other times, and *was*, in ſome ſort, while you were here.

MR. Dodſley tells me, he received a letter from you, acquainting him that Cleone would be played at Bath: I ſhould be glad to receive from you any particulars of its ſucceſs. He is publiſhing an elegant edition of it, which I expect

pect by this very post. The new plate of my grove, which will appear at the end of his Melpomene, is perhaps liable to some exceptions; but, by much, the best that has yet appeared. Do not forget to send me your objections to it. As to the epilogue, I have totally banished, I think, every one of the lines which he *substituted*; have left to him the choice of two or three readings for the four last lines; and though none of them quite please me, yet the epilogue, on the whole, discovers more of genius, is more spirited, and less inaccurate. I shall be glad to find that you think the same with me.

In regard to your place, so far as I can form an idea of it, I would have you consult *self*-amusement; I mean, without too much regard to what *others* say or think. As to distinguishing your ingenuity (which I unfeignedly desire you may), the press affords you more *adequate* materials than either your fortune or, perhaps, your place. Do not imagine, however, that I shall not be much delighted with every stroke I trace of yours at Claverton. My faculties are very strongly intuitive in respect of every thing belonging to you: and I should be ashamed if any nook or angle that you had rounded; any wall that you had ruinated; any stream that

you had diverted; or any ſingle ſhrub that you had planted; ſhould elude my diſcovery: yet you will ſhine *more* by means of the preſs; and if I ſaid any thing concerning your ——, that did not *encourage* you to perfect it, I am ſure, I muſt uſe terms very inexpreſſive of my meaning. Without any more words, let me *intreat* you to proceed with it; give a *full ſcope* to your imagination; and if there ſhould be aught one would wiſh *retrenched*, it is mighty *eaſily done*.

I HAVE indeed *thoughts* (for I *never* uſe the word *reſolutions*) of publiſhing my Elegies next winter—you will gainſay, when I tell you my intention of publiſhing alſo my very farm; at leaſt, about eight or ten ſcenes taken from it, by way of top and tail-pieces for thoſe Elegies.—The world will perhaps tax my vanity; but I do not in the leaſt care.—The pleaſure which that world gives me, I am very conſcious, will not be too *high*; and I am determined that the pain it may ſeek to give ſhall bear proportion: yet, ſhould I be ſorry to obtrude ſtuff upon it, either from the pencil or the pen; and my good friend Mr. Dodſley has ſometimes pained me, not a little.

I TELL you, you *cannot* allow for winter.—That very ſcene near Priory-gate ſhews not a bit of

road

road in *ſummer*; though the conſciouſneſs of a firm rail there would add to my own tranquillity.—Mr. Knight has given me Strange's prints, which, I hear, are fine. Dodſley gives me ſwans: but for theſe two months paſt I have been a librarian, or rather a bookbinder; yet nothing more *unfeignedly*, than yours and Mrs. Graves's moſt affectionate humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCVII. To the ſame, on Fables, Mottoes, Urns, Inſcriptions, &c.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Oct. 3, 1759.

DEPEND upon it, I ſhall ſee Claverton before winter.—The miſchief is, that, with as violent a propenſity as ever perſon felt, I ſhall not be able to reach your hemiſphere, while Mr. Spence, Mr. Dodſley, and Mr. Whitehead give it ſuch peculiar luſtre, in my eyes. This I did not deſpair of doing at the time Mr. Dodſley left me at Birmingham. It turned upon an event, which I did not indeed explain to him, the accommodation of the affair with D—; which concerns near one half of my little fortune, and which,

which, if I have any luck on my ſide, muſt now be perfected within a fortnight. I was ſhewn the rough ſketch of our *conveyances* laſt Saturday. —Once for all, my *indolence* is not in fault; my health and my worldly embarraſſments *have* often been ſo, and at preſent *are*. "Pol me "miſerum, patrone, vocares, ſi verum, &c."

Dodsley, to give his book eclat, ſhould allow himſelf time to *abridge* and *poliſh*. It is not enough in my opinion, merely to ſurpaſs L'Eſtrange and Croxall. The grand *exception* to Fables conſiſts in giving *ſpeech* to animals, &c. a greater *violation* of *truth* than appears in any other kind of writing! This objection is inſurmountable. Their peculiar *advantage* is to remove the offenſiveneſs of advice; in order to which, one ſhould perhaps purſue a medium betwixt the ſuperfluous garniture of La Fontaine, &c. and the naked ſimplicity and laconiſm of Phædrus. In reſpect of his own new-invented Fables, I wiſh him to deviſe uncommon ſubjects, and to inculcate refined morals. But pray ſend me *your* two directly, which will anſwer all that I expect in Fables.

Did Mr. Dodſley tell you of the ſeat in my ſhrubbery which I had taken the freedom to inſcribe to you? I could not *ſatisfy* myſelf in an inſcription;

inſcription; and, from a kind of ſpleen and averſion to delay, made uſe of the ſhorteſt that I could deviſe. The ſeat and ſcroll are elegant. The inſcription, only,

" AMICITIAE ET MERITIS
" RICHARDI GRAVES.
"—IPSAE TE, TITYRE, PINVS, IPSI TE FONTES,
" &c. VOCABVNT."

I WILL not be ſo affected as to pretend that the much greater compliment you deſign *me* is more offenſive to my modeſty than it is pleaſing to my friendſhip. I wiſh however it could be a little ſhortened. The " inter hortenſis elegantiæ " ſtudioſos" ſeems a little too verboſe for inſcription. Beſide, I had *rather* the compliment were not thrown with ſo much *emphaſis* upon any ſkill I have in gardening; but in ſome ſort *divided* betwixt *that* and *poetry*, if you perceive no great objection; ſuppoſe,

" AMICITIAE G. S.
" QVI
" NAIADAS PARITER AC MVSAS
" EXCOLENDO
" SIMVL ET VILLAM EIVS ELEGANTISSIMAM
" NOMENQVE SVVM
" ILLVSTRAVIT."

or,

or,

"AMICITIAE G. S.
QVI,
"NAIDAS PARITER AC MVSAS
"FELICITER EXCOLENDO,
"SIMVL ET PATERNA RVRA
"NOMENQVE EIVS
"ILLVSTRAVIT,
"ET NOMINI SVO
"NON EXIGVVM DECVS
"ADDIDIT."

"AMICITIAE G. S.
"QVI
"BENIGNAS PARITER EXPERTVS EST
"NAIADAS ET MVSAS."

or,

"CVIVS VOTIS
"FAVERVNT PARITER NAIADESQVE, &c."

A motto,

"(FORTVNATVS ET ILLE, DEOS QVI NOVIT
"AGRESTES)
"PANAQVE, SILVANVMQVE, SENEM, NYMPHAS-
"QVE SORORES." VIRG.

"Illustravit"

"Illuſtravit" ſeems an happy word here, if it do not ſavour too much of *nobility:* villa, I preſume, implies no more than a country manſion-houſe.—But I leave the whole to your diſcretion.

Now you ſpeak of *our* Arcadias, pray, did you ever ſee a print or drawing of Pouſſin's Arcadia? The *idea* of it is ſo very pleaſing to me, that I had no peace till I had uſed the inſcription on one ſide of Miſs Dolman's urn, "Et in Arcadia Ego." Mr. Anſon has the two ſhepherds with the monument and inſcription in alto relievo at Shugborough.—Mr. Dodſley will borrow me a drawing of it from Mr. Spence. See it deſcribed, vol. I. page 53. of the Abbé du Bos, ſur la poeſie et la peinture.

Tell Mr. Dodſley, if he be yet at Bath, that Mr. Cambridge called and dined with me; anſwering preciſely to the idea which I had conceived of him from Mr. D—'s account.—I wiſh to God he may have brought you acquainted with Mr. Spence; to whom you are, in my eſtimation, the moſt *like* of any one I know. Is Mr. Spence yet at Bath? Mr. D— is gone, or going. Either he or the former told me that * anecdote of Pope

* On the Prince's aſking Pope, how he could be glad to ſee him, when he expreſſed ſo much contempt of Kings, Pope anſwered, "Though he did not like old Lyons, he loved the "young ones before their claws grew."

and

and the Prince of Wales long ago. Pray read Madame De Sevigné's Letters—they have amuſed me much of late. I hope, within a poſt, to ſend you a neat plan of my farm, &c.; the ſame to Mr. Spence by your means, if he be at Bath. Do you hear who is to be Biſhop of Worceſter? Give me the earlieſt intelligence you can gather. —The late Biſhop viſited me laſt year; and intended, I hear, to have done ſo this. I wiſh we may have another as obliging and polite as I always found his late Lordſhip.

I WANT to incloſe ſome little engravings, &c. to you, but muſt wait till I can get a frank. Write *directly*, for this once, I beg you, though you prove dilatory another time. Of all books whatever, read Burke (ſecond edit.) "Of the Sublime and Beautiful;" and of all points whatever, believe that I am, with my beſt good wiſhes to Mrs. Graves, dear Sir, ever your moſt affectionate and invariable friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

"DI MEMORIA NVDRISSI PIV QVE DI SPEME." How do you like this motto for an urn?

MY beſt compliments to Mr. Spence and Mr. Dodſley, if at Bath. I will write ſoon to each of them—your garden is as pretty as you can make it.

XCVIII. To the same.

The Leasowes,
Oct. 26, 1759.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I WANT no conviction of the pleasure which you will receive from the termination of my infernal lawsuit. It must, if I have *any* luck, be finally adjusted in about nine days time; after having robbed me of my peace for six of the best years of my life. During the *former* part of life, I languished for an acquaintance somewhat more extensive: and when the company that flocked to see my place removed all grounds of *that* complaint, this accursed dispute arose, and mixed with every enjoyment that was offered me.—I have sometimes found entertainment in balancing the good and evil that has been allotted me in general; and have in the end imagined the good prevalent, and that I have great reason to be thankful for more happiness than I deserve.—Yet are there many awkward circumstances that forbid the *scale* to fall *precipitately*; among the chief, I place the distance to which I see you and one or two others removed. This is indeed an heavy article, and, were it not for letters, would be insupportable.

As

As to Mr. Dodſley's collection of Fables, you are miſtaken if you think that I peruſed the quarto book. I dipped into it here and there, and thought there wanted *much* alteration. There was a little book with a paper-cover, on which I beſtowed no ſmall pains; and when I had ſo done, croſſed the Fables which I thought might well enough paſs muſter. Addiſon would have been the beſt writer of Fables of any author I know—the purity of ſtyle—the conciſeneſs—the dry humour—and the familiar manner.—As to Dodſley's publiſhing this winter, he may poſſibly do ſo, without loſs of credit; but when one conſiders that they are, or ought to be, the ſtandard for years to come, one can hardly avoid wiſhing him to give them the poliſh of another ſummer. 'Twas fortunate that you pitched upon "The Raven and Mag-"pie" to tranſcribe for me; as Mr. Dodſley had ſent me "The Sun-flower and the Tuberoſe" *before*. I think the laſt ſomewhat inferior, but will re-conſider it before I write again. The Fable which I literally tranſlated from Phædrus was "The Wolf and the Crane," in order to give Dodſley an idea on *what* Rollin laid the ſtreſs in Fables.

As to the inſcription, I will endeavour to adjuſt it to your mind—"Meritiſque reconditi-

"oribus" may do, but is not explicit enough. I want fully to expreſs a character that ſhines remarkably among ſelect acquaintance, and yet (through extreme refinement) makes leſs figure in the public eye.

I HAD made the ſame objection to Burke's chapter upon *words*—and yet there ſeems to be ſomething right in it. Du Bos (which I have only ſeen in *French*, but which I believe is alſo tranſlated) conſiſts of three volumes, 12mo. His ſubjects are pleaſing, and his knowledge may be entertaining; but his genius ſeems not very profound, from the little that I have conſulted in him.

DODSLEY is *preciſely* what you ſay of him; an object of eſteem and love, and in ſome *degree* of admiration. His *ear* does not wholly pleaſe me in writing, and yet he is intimately affected with muſick—Lord L—'s ear is perhaps the reverſe. I mean, he does not much regard muſic, yet writes harmoniouſly in verſe and proſe.

ROBERTSON I think to buy—Butler alſo, though I ſhall not admire him—Lord Clarendon, when I am *rich*—Raſſelas has a few refined ſentiments thinly ſcattered, but is upon the whole below Mr. J—. Did I tell you I had a letter from

from Johnſon, incloſing Vernon's Pariſh-clerk? Pray take Dodſley's advice in regard to your ———; and heighten the ridiculouſneſs of your *heroe*, which *his* kind of *lunacy* will countenance, yet admit him to ſay good things.—But do not make *any* alteration in the narrative of your own ſtory—at leaſt, till I have again peruſed it—Do not ſpurn this fifty pounds. It will procure you numerous conveniences, which you would perhaps otherwiſe deny yourſelf.

I HAVE paſſed four or five days, betwixt this week and laſt, at my Lord Ward's at Hinley.—This has furniſhed me with franks, beſide the conſolation I derive from *having paid* a viſit of *this kind*. It is "ſpinis e pluribus *una* ſaltem "exempta." The *reſtraint* renders them *ſpinæ*. I hope I may ſay ſo without umbrage, or giving an appearance of diſreſpect. For Mr. W— is an agreeable man, and my reception was very polite.

I HAVE three or four more of theſe ſuperb viſits to make, and which I may not omit without giving real offence. To Lord Plymouth, next week; Lord Stamford's, the week after; then to Lord Lyttelton, at our Admiral's; and then to Lord Foley, if your friend Dr. Charleton will accompany me; then, &c. alas! alas! "Quid me

" exempta juvat ſpina?" I muſt conclude upon a ſeparate paper. That your *expectation* may not *deceive* you in regard to the plan I promiſed, I incloſe a ſurvey of my farm reduced to miniature by a neighbouring artiſt. Let me know if it bring the place to your memory—I think to have a plate (which may be done at Birmingham for ſix or eight ſhillings), that ſhall leave me no trouble but to tinge the impreſſions with colors; in order to give my friends. But do you adviſe me to engrave *this*, or another that is twice as large?

I HAVE purchaſed " Gerard upon Taſte," the author of which is a Profeſſor at Edinburgh, and the book commended in the Review—you will ſay that the Reviewers are partial to Scotch-people—I know nothing of that, but the book is learned, and on a pleaſing ſubject—I may perhaps add a very *important* one—for ſurely it is altogether unqueſtionable that taſte *naturally* leads to virtue. I am however in ſome doubt whether it will give you that amuſement which Burke's has done.—I *muſt* now take my leave, having engagements of a different kind; but not till I have deſired my hearty reſpects to Mrs. Graves, and her acceptance of this " Grove and " King-fiſher." I am, dear Mr. Graves, ever and moſt entirely, your very affectionate,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCIX. To

XCIX. To the ſame, on his Want of Leiſure.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 24, 1759.

THOUGH I write to you again ſo ſoon, yet it really grieves me to hear the complaint which you ſo often make for want of time. I, who have time to *waſte* by luſtres, cannot have patience with the world, that ſuffers *you* to want the leiſure which you would employ to ſo much better purpoſes. Perhaps, however, you are as *happy* as more leiſure could *make* you; the caſe is not ſo *clear*, as to leave me ſatisfied of the contrary. And yet, as the pleaſures of imagination have an undoubted claim to a real exiſtence, they muſt ſurely afford very *lively* ſenſations to perſons of your ſenſibility and refinement.—Be this as it may, I *will* always *murmur*, that you can ſo ill ſpare time for literary amuſement.—Nevertheleſs, make *one* effort, and finiſh the taſk you have now before you. I muſt confeſs, you may naturally reply, that I am now become an intereſted perſon; but *this*, I am ſure, will be no check to your activity.

Mr. William Duncombe ſent (with the firſt volume of Horace) one of the ſatires in Ms.

inſcribed to me. Upon purchaſing, however, the ſecond volume, I find *my* name is changed to Hawkeſworth.—Who knows but I loſt this compliment by writing to you, my friend, while I ſhould have been writing to him?—if ſo, indeed, you ought to make it up to me; and I am ſure I ſhall prize *your* compliment beyond that of which I have been deprived.

THE view of B—, which you mention, I have indeed ſeen a long time ago; but ſurely the *water-fall* is quite deteſtable. There is ſomething on each ſide, as I remember, that puts one in mind of a porridge-pot boiling over beneath the pot-lid. The appearance of the houſe and the back-ground is better; this was adjuſted by the painter, the other (as I think Smith told me) by an old houſe-ſteward of Lord T—'s.

I HAVE incloſed another copy of the lines to Venus, for your emendation.—Thank you for the ſtanza you introduced.—I meant, indeed, *before*, to allude to *natural* beauty more than *moral*; but did not fully enough expreſs myſelf. There remains no tranſition now, but from *animal* beauty to *inanimate*; which is eaſier.

YOU will obſerve, that I take great liberties with the Fables you aſk me to reviſe.—Dodſley

fley muſt think me *very* fantaſtical or *worſe*, while I was correcting thoſe he wrote at The Leaſowes.—I find my *ear* much more apt to take offence than moſt other people's; and, as *his* is far leſs delicate than mine, he muſt of courſe believe, in many places, that I altered merely for alteration's ſake. I cannot be eaſy without ſome certain proportion betwixt one ſentence and another; betwixt one member of a ſentence and another; without a melody at the cloſe of a paragraph almoſt as agreeable as your "magnificent ſalon."

I HAVE not written to Dodſley any decent letter ſince he arrived at his houſe in London.—I muſt now apply myſelf to write half a ſcore Fables, and, if he chuſes it, a tranſlation of La Motte's Diſcourſe upon the ſubject.—Your reply in regard to the delay of *my* publication cannot be anſwered; that is certain.

WHITFIELD's Journal, I *fear*, is purged of its *moſt* ridiculous paſſages.—Dodſley brought one down hither for Mr. Deane to ſhew my Lord D—th; but he tells me, there remains nothing of that *groſs* abſurdity which I ſaw in your brother's at Mickleton.

THE painter whom I juſt mentioned to have taken ſome portraits through my recommenda-

tion, and to have painted a ruin for my green-room, offers to give me my picture if I chuſe to ſit.—Were you here to lend me your aſſiſtance, I ſhould certainly comply.—Mean while, tell me what you think of ſome of the attitudes that I incloſe. What I myſelf prefer at preſent is, to *leſſen* my *dimenſions* (which of itſelf gives a kind of beauty), and to appear in a kind of night-gown agreeable to the attitude marked AA. The man evidently hits off likeneſſes, and is eſteemed to *ſhine* among the painters of Birmingham. I ſhall be forced to have your picture copied by him, which, by means of dampneſs, flies off the canvas; ſo that, on the whole, I ſhall re-pay his compliment.—This laſt article puts me in mind that I owe you my picture, whenever you demand it; but I would chuſe to defer it till the ſpring, for ſome certain reaſons regarding oeconomy. Remember me *always* to good Mrs. —; and believe me yours, with all poſſible affection,

W. SHENSTONE.

C. To

C. To the same, with an Account of a Design for his own Picture.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Jan. 8, 1760.

WERE I to regulate my compliments by the arrival of *times* and seasons, I should congratulate you upon a *correspondence* which now enters upon its three and twentieth year.— Our *friendship* is of something older date; and is not this an *atchievement* that deserves the honour of a *triumph* both for you and me too?—More, I am sure, than the regular destruction of fifteen or twenty thousand wretches in the field; considering how *uncommon* we find friendships of so long a duration, and how *cheap* we find such victories, not only on the Prussian, but on the Austrian side.

MR. Cambridge (Scriblerus), who called here this autumn, was considering this massacre rather in a philosophical than political view; and, indeed, it does not appear to me that plague, earthquake, or famine, are more pernicious to the human race, than what the world calls Heroes; but enough of this.

YOUR

YOUR want of leiſure gives me pain; ſurely, if I may gueſs by one or two of your laſt letters, you have enlarged the number of your ſcholars, and extended your domeſtic cares, beyond what your circumſtances *require*.

YOU muſt not judge of my painter's abilities by the ſmall ſketch I incloſe.—I deſired him to give me a *ſlight* one; and have, perhaps, ruined even *that* by endeavouring to bring it nearer to what the picture now *is myſelf*. It will give you a tolerable idea in moſt points, except the Pan, which has his face turned towards the front; and is not near ſo conſiderable.—I choſe to have this *term* introduced, not only as he carries my favourite reeds, but as he is the principal *ſylvan* deity.—The Water-nymph below has the word "Stour" on the mouth of her urn; which, in ſome ſort, riſes at The Leaſowes. On the ſcroll is, "Flumina amem ſyl-"vaſque inglorius," alluding to them *both*.—The Pan, you will perhaps obſerve, hurts the *ſimplicity* of the picture—not much, as we have managed him; and the intention here is, I think, a balance.

THE dog on the other ſide is my faithful Lucy, which you perhaps remember; and who *muſt* be *nearer* the *body* than ſhe perhaps would, if

if we had more room. However I believe, I shall cause her head to cut off that little cluster of angles, where the balustrade joins the base of the arch. The balustrade is an improvement we made the other day: it is, I think, a great one; not only as it gives a symmetry or balance to the curtain of which you complained; but as it extends the *area* on which I stand, and shortens the *length* of this *half-arch*. The painter objected to a tree; I know not why; unless that we could introduce no *stem* without encroaching too much upon the landscape: but the reason he gave was, it would be an injury to the face.—The console is an Apollo's head. The impost does not go further than the pilaster, which ends the corner; and here the drawing is erroneous.—We are, I think, to have a carpet, though we know not well how to manage it.

And now, I must tell you the dimensions.—The figure itself is three feet, three inches and a half; the whole picture four feet, eleven inches, by two feet, three inches and three-quarters.—The colour of the gown, a sea-green; waistcoat and breeches, buff-colour; stockings white, or rather pearl-colour; curtain a terra-sienna, or very rich reddish brown.—I think the whole will have a good effect; but beseech you to send me your opinion *directly*.

There

There are ſome things we can alter; but there are others we muſt not.

You ſhall have one of the ſize you deſire in the ſpring; but will you not calculate for ſome one place in your room? The painter takes very ſtrong likeneſſes; is young; rather daring than delicate in his manner, though he paints well in enamel; good-natured; ſlovenly; would improve much by application. Adieu!

W. S.

CI. To the ſame, on Fable, and other Articles of Taſte and Literature.

The Leaſowes,
Feb. 9, 1760.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I COULD not underſtand, by Mr. Dodſley's laſt letter to me, that he had any *ſort* of intention to publiſh his Fables this winter. Preſuming upon this delay, and having neither had the *leiſure* nor the *frame* of mind fit to take his preface into conſideration, I have hitherto deferred to do ſo; and can only ſay in *general*, that I could wiſh you had happened to be more copious in your obſervations. La Motte's Diſ-

courſe on Fables is a moſt excellent performance; containing, as appears to *me*, all that need be ſaid upon the ſubject, and this expreſſed with all imaginable elegance and perſpicuity. I believe I ſhall adviſe our friend D— to make more ample uſe of this diſſertation. There is a tranſlation of La Motte into *proſe*, which is altogether *below contempt*; and yet, for aught I know, the *only* one. The word *naive* is very probably *that* for which he has ſubſtituted the word *lively*; though by no means of ſimilar import. *Natural* approaches nearer it; but according to La Motte is not preciſe: and, as the words *Naif* and *Naïveté* ſeem of late to become more in vogue, I will here give you an extract of what he ſays upon the ſubject: "Je "ne ſouhaiterois plus rien à l'Auteur de Fables, "ſi ce n'eſt d'être fidele au ſentiment, & de le "peindre toujours avec la *Naïveté* qui le ca-"ractériſe; car j'oſe encore diſtinguer le *Na-"turel* & le *Naif*. Le *Naturel* renferme une "idée plus vague, & il eſt oppoſé en général au "*Recherché*, au *Forcé*; au lieu, que le *Naif* "l'eſt particulierement au *Refléchi*, & n'appar-"tient qu'au *ſentiment*.

"Le *ſublime*, ſelon cette idée, peut être "*Naif*. La Reponſe du vieil Horace à la queſ-"tion qu'on lui fait ſur la conduite de ſon fils;

"que

" que vouliez-vous qu'il fit contre trois? *Qu'il*
" *mourut*. Cette reponſe eſt *naive*; parce
" que c'eſt l'expreſſion toute nuë du *ſentiment* de
" ce Romain; qui préfére la mort de ſon fils à ſa
" honte. Il ne *répond* pas préciſément à ce
" qu'on lui demande; il dit ſeulement ce qu'il
" *ſent*. Ce n'eſt que dans la vers ſuivant que la
" *Réflexion* ſuccéde à la *Naïveté*.

" Ou qu'un beau déſeſpoir alors le ſecourut.

" Il *raiſonne* dans ce vers; il n'a fait que *ſentir*
" dans le premier.

" Les occaſions du *Naïf* ſont, peut-etre, plus
" fréquentes dans la Fable; & l'éloge de La
" Fontaine eſt de n'en avoir gueres manquées;
" dans la Fable du Pot au Lait, le diſcours
" qu'il prête à ſa Latiere eſt un chef-d'œvre de
" *Naïveté*, d'autant plus ſingulier, que ſous
" *l'apparence du raiſonnement* le plus ſuivi, le *ſen-*
" *timent* ſe montre dans toute ſa force; ou pour
" mieux dire, dans toute ſon *yvreſſe*."

And now, let me know what Engliſh word you would employ to interpret *Naïf*. *Sentimental* has ſome pretenſions; but is not wholly to one's mind.

I bought

I BOUGHT the quarto edition of La Motte's Fables, to which this eſſay is prefixed; though the vaunted cuts which tempted me to this extravagance did not anſwer my expectation. The author, with much addreſs, begs the Duke of Orleans to be at the expence of them; which, to the beſt of my remembrance, was "deux mille ecus."

MR. Hurd, you ſee, is one of Dr. Warburton's Chaplains. I bought his Dialogues Moral and Political, almoſt as ſoon they were publiſhed. Sir Edward Lyttelton told me, the introductory one would be omitted in the next edition. The three following are very ingenious; but the two former are a little ambiguous in regard to his intended moral: the two laſt are wholly political, and I have not yet peruſed them, though eſteemed the *beſt*.

HAVE you ſeen Dr. Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments," which is prodigiouſly commended, and which I have bought, but not read?—You will ſee an account of this in the Monthly Review.

I HAVE lately been reading one or two volumes of The Rambler; who, excepting againſt

some few hardnesses in his manner *, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most *nervous*, most *perspicuous*, most concise, and most harmonious prose-writers I know.—A learned diction improves by time.

I am sorry to find no mention of your —— in all the letters which I have received of late. Do not think of *dropping* or even *delaying* the publication of it; only, if you please, before it goes to the press, let me peruse it once deliberately.—What think you, if Dodsley approve it, of admitting cuts into your scheme?

And now, from *cuts* I proceed to *pictures*. Alcock's portrait of me is in a manner finished; and has been hung up for these nine days past, in its carved frame, opposite to the fire-place in my library. *They say* it is a likeness, allowing for the diminution of size. Indeed, if I can conclude any thing from the strong resemblance which he has produced of *others* here, I may form some *conjecture* that he has not failed in mine.—Be this as it will, the picture is, upon the whole, a tolerably pleasing one; and this is the *most* I must dare to say, considering my own person makes so large a part of it.

* He too often makes use of the *abstract* for the *concrete*.

What think you of a tawney or reddish brown for the robe or night-gown, with black for the waistcoat and breeches, reserving green for the curtain? though green is, with me at least, no very gay colour, nor has it that effect which you apprehended in the drapery. Terra-sienna is a delightful colour; so, I think, is Roman ocre burnt. Let me know then, what objections you have to the drapery just now proposed. Let me know also any design that you think most pleasing for a back-ground; or any story of two or three figures, that would be suitable for a relievo.

From *pictures* I proceed to *painters*. I believe, Alcock would go and settle at Bath, if Amos Green could be induced to join him. Amos Green is the name of the painter whom I recommended to you *before my fever*. He is esteemed inferior to no one in England for fruit. He also paints flowers, insects, and dead-game, *very* well. To this he would adjoin the business of water-painting. Alcock would paint portraits in oil; and to this he would add enamel-painting: both of them the best-natured young fellows in the world. Now suppose them also *ingenious*, and tell me whether they would have a chance to *thrive*.

You ought to have a very conſiderable *amends*, if you are to be plagued with writing and with muſic-maſters.—I believe I rate your time and trouble at a much higher price than you do yourſelf.

Dr. Blackſtone has raiſed himſelf to a very eminent figure, indeed, in the world of letters. I rejoice at it, without one particle of envy, both as he is your friend, and a perſon of merit. I believe no one, beſides yourſelf, would have dreamt of your odd analogy betwixt him and me.—I know not *how* they came to inſert that inſipid Song of mine in the Chronicle.—What ſenſation it cauſed in me, was that of diſapprobation; as it looked like laying ſtreſs on what one knows to be of no importance.

The chief points wherein my picture varies from your drawing is in the corner below the baſe of the pedeſtal; where an antique vaſe is introduced with a flower and two or three leaves of the ſcarlet Geranium. The gilt vaſe agrees well enough with the gold fringe on the edge of the curtain; but the whole is ſo *ſubdued*, as not to catch the eye too ſtrongly. It was chiefly meant to obviate the diſagreeableneſs of the *parallel* lines and angles occaſioned by the ſtep in that corner; but it crowds that

ſide a little, if one look from top to bottom; and, though a pleaſing object, it is hard to ſay whether it do more good or harm.

It is time now to take my leave, with my hearty reſpects to Mrs. Graves, and with the uſual aſſurance, that I remain your moſt affectionate and faithful friend,

W. Shenstone.

Do write ſoon.

CII. To the ſame, on his neglecting his Correſpondence.

The Leaſowes,
July 7, 1760.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I MUST confeſs that I do not altogether find your argument concluſive.—An hurry of buſineſs *may* be neceſſary, and ſomewhat inconſiſtent with frequent correſpondence; but a ſtate of *leiſure*, which I wiſhed you, does not imply a courſe of *diſſipation*; which makes your preſent apology for not writing to me before. And ſo, betwixt buſineſs at one time, and diſſipation at another, I am to be defrauded of a correſpon-

dence that is quite essential to my well-being. Pardon me, if, on such occasion, you find me extremely clear-sighted in the foibles of my friends; and do not say with the man in Horace, "Cur in amicorum vitiis, &c." The *matter* is too *important* for me to connive at any sort of sophism.—However, to make you easy on this head, I am convinced the letter was owing to *you*; for which I will draw my apology neither from *business* nor dissipation: and yet how justly might I palliate my long silence upon *either* footing! Since I wrote to you, I have been *busied* in bringing about a conclusion with D—. The letters, journies, &c. *previous* and *posterior* to the execution of articles, would afford me noble matter for excuse.—The constant attendance upon workmen (of which I have fourteen or fifteen this very day), making a piece of water below my Priory, would produce more on the score of *dissipation*—you remember the place.—This, at present, is my chief employment, although Alcock is drawing on the side of my table.—I wonder you do not get some little urns turned, in any sort of wood, about fourteen or fifteen inches high, and painted on the side with figures, in the manner of some antique basso-relievo. He has done something of this sort for me. You may, if you so please, have the ground a dark *bronze*, and the figures a *light* one.

one. I am of late grown fond of bronze (which you yourself may easily execute), and I think it always was your taste.—Dodsley comes hither in about a fortnight, and prints *one* edition of his Fables by means of Baskerville's press and paper. *Mean time*, he is to *give* me his picture done by Reynolds; and to *send* me two bronzed plaster urns, of about twelve inches, with basso-relievo; and two figures (ditto) of Homer and Virgil (of about twenty-one inches) for two niches in my library. The parcel is to be pieced out with Ogilby's Virgil, which I want for the sake of the landscapes.—And now to the particulars of your letter.

I CAN readily conceive how much greater pleasure you must receive from the *retinue* of your journey, than an Archbishop can from all his equipage; and I can truly assure you, I find a pleasure in every pleasure you enjoy.

YOUR room, indeed, will be a noble one; but be sure remember the "Imploravit opes hominis, frænumque recepit," and guard against it.—To speak my sentiments, I think you will. I think with you in regard to Tristram Shandy; so does the author of The Monthly Review, you will see. I bought Webb instantly; but have not read it. Lord Lyttelton is *allowedly* the author of those Dialogues; whose, the very

laſt, I do not know. There is a noble ſpecimen of Scotch poetry tranſlated from the Erſe language.—I have had two copies ſent me from Scotland; and, had I two franks, would ſend you one. "Chryſal, or The Adventures of a Guinea" (real characters intended), will amuſe you. Something *ever* occurs that obſtructs my travelling at all—and though I long *ardently* to viſit you, the Lord knows when it will be; yet *be* it certainly will, when I accompany Mr. Knight to Mr. Bamfield's; where I am preſſingly invited by that gentleman and his neighbours, Lady Egmont, Sir Charles Tynte, &c.—I have about an hundred things more to ſay; which I muſt defer till I have heard from you.—God bleſs you and yours.

W. SHENSTONE.

CIII. To the ſame, on Dodſley's Fables, and other Literary Articles.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Mar. 1, 1761.

ALTHOUGH this interval in our correſpondence muſt be placed, I fear, to *my* account, you will hardly think it mends the matter,

ter, to *fill* my present letter even with the best-grounded apologies—I will only mention a bad state of health, which has been my lot this winter, as a general excuse for two or three months silence; and then declare, as with truth I may, that the esteem and affection which you have so well deserved of me have never undergone the least diminution or abatement. It is with me a melancholy task, to *write* letters when I am not well; although it be the time, of all others, when it is most necessary for me to *receive* them.—Our friend Dodsley, I presume, has sent you a book of his Fables before this time. What merit I have there, is in the *Essay*; in the *original Fables*, although I can hardly claim a single Fable as my own; and in the *Index*, which I caused to be thrown into the form of *Morals*, and which are almost wholly mine. I wish to God it may sell; for he has been at great expence about it. The two rivals which he has to dread, are, the editions of Richardson and of Croxall. The *Fables* in Croxall are tolerably written: his *reflections*, little to the purpose, either for boys or grown people.—Richardson's *Improvement of L'Estrange* would be a better collection, both for the *Fables* and the *moral Reflections*, had he not admitted, through an extravagant and mistaken love of drollery, that vulgarity of phrase which in many places is not *common English*.

Engliſh. This, I think, a true ſtate of the caſe: ſay the beſt you can in behalf of Dodſley.—As to his cuts, though to *him* expenſive, they will hardly, I fear, meet with much of your approbation—the ſcale is much too ſmall—and the emblematick prints which are larger will ſcarce, I fear, be underſtood.—I procured a copy from Baſkerville *before* the plates were *inſerted*, and have cauſed my painter (Alcock) to ſupply the vacancies with ſome devices of my own—ſome account of which I ſend you, as it may amuſe you for a minute. I want one or two to compleat my ſcheme, and ſhould be glad if you would propoſe ſome in your next letter.—I return you my hearty thanks for the hints you gave for the Cambridge verſes; but when I received them it was too late, and I myſelf too much indiſpoſed, either to throw them into proper form, or even to anſwer that gentleman's letter; which I thought a very genteel one.—I know not what he did on that occaſion, having ſeen neither Cambridge nor Oxford verſes—Mr. Dodſley gave me "The Environs of London."—Between friends, I wiſh he may find five thouſand readers, whom the management of that work pleaſes more than *me*.—I will try to get you ſome of the *cuts*, if you deſire me to do ſo, though it will reflect a kind of tacit diſlike of the *whole* performance—His brother publiſhes

this

this winter "The Works of Soame Jenyns," in three pocket-volumes; and a Chineſe novel from a Mſ. tranſlation reviſed, &c. by a friend of mine. You have perhaps heard me ſpeak of Mr. Percy—he *was* in treaty with Mr. James Dodſley, for the publication of our beſt old ballads in three volumes.—He has a large folio Mſ. of ballads, which he ſhewed me, and which, with his own natural and acquired talents, would qualify him for the purpoſe, as well as any man in England. I propoſed the ſcheme for him *myſelf*, wiſhing to ſee an elegant *edition* and good collection of this kind.—I was alſo to have aſſiſted him in ſelecting and rejecting; and in fixing upon the beſt readings—But my illneſs broke off our correſpondence, the beginning of winter—and I know not what he has done ſince. —There is a New Peerage going to be publiſhed —with, I believe, the draughts of the Peers houſes—Lightholer called here, and ſaid he had taken Lord Lyttelton's, and Lord Stamford's, for that purpoſe—the latter of which he ſhewed me. —Thus have I told you what I hear of new *publications*—as to what paſſes in the buſy world, I know no more than the Chronicle informs me—unleſs when *your* letters happen to be *rounded* with little anecdotes from Bath.—Have you ſeen Baſkerville's new Prayer-books?—My Lord Dartmouth has undertaken to preſent two to the

King

King and Princeſs.—Do, for *charity* ſake, make me ſome amends for this long chaſm in our correſpondence, by a very early and long letter—I am ſick to hear from you; being, with ardent and ſincere affection, your ever faithful friend and ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

"Our little life is *rounded* with a ſleep."
SHAKESPEARE.

CIV. To the ſame, with ſome Political Anecdotes.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, May 2, 1761.

I WILL, upon your laſt aſſurance, take it *ever* for granted, that you do not omit writing upon any ſcore of ceremony. This will render your ſilence, at leaſt in ſome *degree*, leſs irkſome to me; when I do not think it the effect of my own procraſtination.—Mr. Dodſley had ſold two thouſand of his Fables long ago; but complained that he ſhould *loſe* thirty pounds by my neighbour Baſkerville's impreſſion; and that he ſhould not be more than ten pounds gainer upon the *whole*.

I told

I told him it was enough, in books of *this sort*, if the first edition paved the way for their future establishment in schools. And surely so it is: for a book of this kind, once established, becomes an absolute estate for many years; and brings in at least as certain and as regular returns. I would *wish* him to give the polite world one more edition from Baskerville's press; admitting only a *new* sett of emblematical top and tail-pieces; and confining those empty cuts relating to each Fable to the cheap edition which he prints at London. A second edition of this latter sort will appear in a little time; and if you have any improvements to propose, he will very thankfully receive them. Mr. Spence offers him to write *the life* afresh; and Spence, Burke, Lowth, and Melmoth, advise him to discard *Italicks*. I confess he has used them to a very great *excess*, but yet I do not think they should be utterly discarded.

I DID not intend that Mr. Davenport should ever hear of those verses; and how he came to do so, is past my comprehension. He seemed to me to have deserted Worfield, without any intention to return again. I therefore meant to inscribe them under my own Venus, in order to afford some novelty, at an *easy rate*, to those who are curious enough to *repeat* their visits here.

Pray,

Pray, if you ſee Mr. and Mrs. Davenport, preſent my beſt reſpects to them; — and as to the verſes, I will ſend you a copy for them, if you *deſire* or *adviſe* ſo me to do. — Mr. S — is agreeable, not void of learning, has ſome ſmartneſs, but little taſte. — Mrs. S — has *much* of the latter; and perhaps imagination, which makes a part of taſte, may have had no ſmall ſhare in converting her to Popery. — Mr. Powys I have almoſt forgot. — You are ingenious and very inventive in regard to the means of giving yourſelf mortification. I dare to ſay, your new building ſuggeſts no ſuch idea as you conceive. — And I think it ſufficient in a parſonage-houſe, if one ſees detached ſpecimens of taſte or elegance, without uniformity, or even without conſiſtency.

I DO not find but that you *figure* among the gentry near Bath. Dr. Charleton, who was here yeſterday with Sir Francis and Mr. Knight, gave me an account that the B — of G — had been to pay his reſpects to you. I will not enter into particulars, but would wiſh you to cultivate his acquaintance. — I ſhewed Sir Francis the dead colouring of the picture which I intend to ſend to you; — but you muſt know that Alcock is the moſt volatile of all creatures that have not wings. By way of improving the picture I meant

I meant for Dodsley, he has made it infinitely less like, and yet it must go to London as *it is*, for God knows when he can be brought to alter it.

I ASKED the Doctor, how Mr. Blackstone came to obtain a seat in Parliament; and his answer was, "The King insisted on it, as he was a "man of learning and ingenuity."—The enmity betwixt Lord L—n and Mr. P—, I find, continues in its full force; insomuch that my Lord is to have no place while Mr. P— continues in the ministry.—My Lord B—'s promotion was, it seems, demanded by the D. of N— and Mr. P—, as they would not be exposed to bear the blame, while he was the chief mover behind the curtain. These little particles of intelligence have, I believe, Sir —— for their author.—I was told by another politician, the same day, that we were not to expect a peace—that the French, who might give up the Colonies, would not resign the Fishery.

MR. Knight, his mother and sister, go through Bath to Mr. Bamfylde's in about three weeks, if nothing intervene. I am teazed greatly to accompany them,—by my own *inclination*, I can assure you, as well as their *importunity*. I do not say I will *not*, nor must I ever promise you *beforehand* that I *will*. I have good reasons to the

the contrary. They have ſome thoughts of bringing Dr. Charleton into the party.

BELIEVE me ever yours and Mrs. Graves's.

W. SHENSTONE.

CV. To the ſame, on the intended Publication of his Works.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Sept. 14, 1761.

I OUGHT to have thanked you many weeks ago, for a very *long* and *entertaining* letter; the *length* of which, as well as the *entertainment*, was increaſed by a Poſtſcript a few days after. —But as the Winter is with me a dull and uniform ſeaſon, ſo the Summer is a time of univerſal diſſipation; and very happy do I think myſelf, when, after a continual ſucceſſion of company, viſits paid, and excurſions taken, I can ſit down in peace and quietneſs, to attend to the buſineſs of correſpondence and friendſhip. Either reaſon, habit, or complexion tells me, that I am never *otherwiſe* ſo properly employed.

THE laſt digreſſion I made was to the concert at Worceſter, to hear The Meſſiah well performed;

formed; to meet a number of faces one knows; but first, and principally, to visit your brother, *without* which motive I had not gone. In the two *former* respects, the journey answered my expectation:—but, alas! your brother was gone into Herefordshire. I, however, alighted out of the chaise; and the house-keeper very civilly shewed me his delightful parlour, that looks into the meadows, the Prebend's gardens, and down the Severn to Malvern-hills. A more agreeable town-house cannot possibly be found any where. But I regretted, when I reached the inn, that I had not asked to see his children; for I either heard them up-stairs, had a glimpse of them at the window, or fancied, to a degree of conviction, that they were most of them within the house. I now return to remark upon some particulars in your letter—I believe it is that indifference you complain of, which is the *grand* detriment to genius in an advanced part of life. In all *poetical* affairs, we are too apt to cry out with Pallas, "Non est mihi tibia tanti." And this renders all our efforts tame, prosaic, and judicious. But this propensity, as well as many others, we should guard against, upon the approach of age: change the object of our amusements; cherish hopes, well or ill-grounded, of finding that pleasure in the novelty of objects, which we have not found in any individual.

These are the means of *preserving our vivacity* a somewhat longer time than it naturally lasts; but how far it is *prudent* to attach ourselves to the world that we must leave, is a point which *you* better can determine. Refined taste, as it implies a *love* of physical beauty, has this tendency.

THERE is nothing can be more rational than what you say about the expediency of *losing no time*, if I mean to collect and publish what I have written. You are indeed very partial to my abilities; but, allowing for *that*, what you mention *coincides* with what I have thought myself, and this for some years past. A more agreeable kind of *distraction* in summer, and an indifferent state of health and spirits in winter, have hitherto prevented any progress in the correction of my pieces. To these I might add a *suspence* about the compositions, and the manner, proper for publication. I am now most inclined to make a collection of the whole. I mean, the best of what are already printed or in Mf.; to publish them by subscription in a large *quarto* size for the sake of profit; and to apologize for this method, by mentioning the expence of top and tail-pieces, with which I mean they shall be embellished. Some of *these* (by the bye) may be taken from my farm, the rest emblematical, in

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an eaſy and careleſs, but, at the ſame time, elegant manner. I ſhould think the inſtance of Mr. Pope might render this method not diſreputable; and it might be advertiſed (as was done by Mr. Spence), that, unleſs a certain number were ſubſcribed for, the whole affair ſhould be no farther proſecuted. This would put it in the way of many friends to ſerve me, who (I flatter myſelf), *with inclination*, eſteem themſelves void of *opportunity*. Let me beg you to think ſeriouſly of this, as well as of a general title-page, before you write again.

THANK you kindly for all the little diverting anecdotes that are contained in your letter. I am glad to hear your *place* brings you company; partly, as it tends to amuſe you; and yet more, as it tends to make your merit more conſpicuous. You and I have led a life of total diſintereſſment. Let me adviſe you to ſeek ſome *advantage* from your commerce with *great men*.—The boy, who was here with you and Mrs. Graves, was here laſt Friday evening with a Mr. Jolliffe and his ſon; the latter of whom obſerved your name upon the bench, and ſeemed proud to declare that he was once your ſchool-fellow. Mr. Stratford (to whom I had written about ſome gold-fiſhes) ſays in his anſwer, "I had the "pleaſure from Bath of waiting upon Mr.

"G—, and was as much satisfied with the "miniature beauties of his place, as with the "polite reception I met with from the owner." If you have an opportunity, you will oblige me by presenting my compliments to that gentleman. —I met Dr. Charlton at Worcester, who stands high in my esteem. —The account of Gothic architecture, &c. is curious; but I have found it in Dr. Warburton's edition of Pope.—I inclose the verses on the Venus de Medicis. —I told you before my intentions, &c. concerning them; and since, I hear that they have appeared in some one of the Magazines—through Dodsley's or Percy's means, for I surely gave a copy to nobody besides—and those copies must be much imperfect.—My picture shall be sent you as soon as I can possibly get Alcock over, who has promised to come every week for these three months past. I believe he *will* come soon.——I did not know of Mr. Warton's compliment; but he is very obliging to me on all occasions, and sends me all that he publishes—I have not yet read Dr. Robinson's History, to my shame be it spoken, though I have the honour to know the author.—I hope the King *will* oblige the Irish Peers with a place in the procession, as that people seems greatly out of temper; and, I fear, not without some reason.

I SEE my friend Dodsley has *let off* his little *squib* upon the marriage, in the Chronicle. "*The* "*King sought a partner,*" &c. and last night was brought me, from Baskerville's press, on the same occasion, very *pompously* printed, the most despicable Grub-street I ever saw.

I HAVE made some little improvements about my place; have taken away the wall in front, and made a handsome ring; have extended my path, in one piece of ground, greatly for the better — but the grand water in the valley will make no figure till next spring.

I HAVE also assisted my friend Hull the comedian in altering the Tragedy of Rosamond; had it brought upon the stage to a full house at Birmingham, where it was very well received; put Hull into a way of making an indirect compliment to the present King in the ten last lines of his Epilogue, which was followed by "God "save great George," &c. in a full chorus of the audience and actors drawn out abreast upon the stage.

SINCE this, there has been deposited in my hands a large collection of Poetry, by a Miss Wheatly of Walsall: many of the pieces writ-

ten in an excellent and truly classical style; simple, sentimental, harmonious, and more correct than I almost ever saw written by a lady. They will be published, I believe, by subscription, under the patronage of Lord Dartmouth.

But nothing in the poetical way has pleased me better than a compliment which I received about nine days ago by the post, under the feigned name *Cotswouldia*.—She must be some Gloustershire lady that has seen the place; as she raises up a Fairy in my grove, into whose mouth she puts the compliment. It seems written by somebody of fashion by the style.—Can you form any conjecture?

There was a Mr. Freeman of Betstow (or some such name) with two or three ladies in a coach and six that were here not long before; a very genteel and polite young man.

I really know not how to stop, when I begin a letter to *you*; and it is one reason why I look upon the task as too considerable to be undertaken at all times. Pray write soon, and believe me wholly yours and Mrs. Graves's.

W. Shenstone.

CVI. To

CVI. To the same, suggesting to him a Subject for Poetry.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, May 20, 1762.

I FIND you will *not* write, unless I give a regular answer to your letters; and yet, God knows, I have a better excuse for my delay, than I wish my friend to have for his punctilio—I mean, indisposition.—Whence it has happened, I cannot say, unless I may blame these continual east winds; but I have suffered more from the smiles of spring, than I have really done from the frowns of winter.

HAVING premised thus much, I lay your letter before me. The expence of printing a sheet of those commendatory verses at a common press is eighteen shillings; and at Baskerville's about three pounds, ten shillings: nor do I mean any decorations, unless perhaps "The "King-fisher," or "View of my Grove," which you know, I *have* engraven ready to *my* hands. So you see that *this* offering to vanity is not likely to be the most expensive.

I WISH you had bestowed somewhat more attention upon *the title*; in which case, I really

believe the job had been executed long ago. Pray be so kind as to re-consider it.—Is not "The Garland of Friendship" a little too quaint? for that, as I remember, was what I proposed.—The *motto* which you proposed was a very good one; and I think also, that the addition of the next line would be an improvement to it; "et isti errori, nomen virtus posu-"isset honestum." But I do not love *double* mottoes; so, if I admit this, I must exclude what I proposed; which, to speak the truth, was of my own invention.

THE custom of prefixing commendatory verses to collections of poetry is now seemingly grown obsolete. Besides, in my case, they would only shew, that I had *taken* up more fame than my funds would answer. I return you many thanks for *your* poetical benevolence; but why do you mention it under the name of *Epigram?* I do not even chuse that it should have the air of *simile* from the *beginning:*

"Lo the tall youth, by partial fate's decree,
"To affluence born, and from restraint set free;
"How pleased he, &c."

I HAVE taken *this* and some *other* liberties with it, and shall insert it among the rest; unless you chuse to *redeem* it, with something more

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to your ſatisfaction; for, to ſpeak with frankneſs, I think it better calculated to do *me* honour than *yourſelf*; though I could eſteem it *good*, if it came from a perſon whoſe abilities I reſpected leſs than yours. There is a ſubject here, which I would recommend to you, if by ſo doing I ſhould lay you under no *reſtraint*. It is my principal caſcade. Its appearance well reſembles the playfulneſs of infancy; ſkipping from ſide to ſide, with a thouſand antic motions, that anſwer no other purpoſe than the mere amuſement of the proprietor. — Other ſimilitudes, &c. would here occur;

"Cui enim naſcenti faciles arriſerunt Muſæ,
"&c."

It then proceeds a few hundred yards, where it *rolls* and *ſlits iron* for manufactures of all kinds; reſembling the graver toils of manhood, either in acquiring money, or furniſhing the conveniencies, comforts, or ornaments of life: and, in this manner, it proceeds under the name of The Stour, ſupplying works for caſting, forging, and ſhaping iron, for every civil or military purpoſe. Perhaps you may not know that my rills are the principal ſources of this river; or that this river ſupplies *more* iron-works than almoſt any ſingle river in the kingdom: for ſo my friend Mr. Knight told me.

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THE Mr. D— you enquire after, and who wrote the *beſt* addreſs Sir Robert Walpole ever *received*, is Mr. Dodington.—Did I never ſend you a liſt of all the concealed names in that Miſcellany?—I began to tranſcribe one from my own ſet; but find one part of my liſt is loſt; I however ſend it, and will piece it out when I find an opportunity; as I purpoſe alſo to give you ſome account of our ſeveral merits in Dodſley's Fables. By the way, do not the verſes to Dr. Cornwallis (now Biſhop) affect you ſenſibly, vol. VI. p. 158?—they do *me*, whenever I read them; and I cannot help applying them to myſelf. I feel ſomewhat of the ſame ſenſation when I read "The Letters of Henry and Fran-"ces;" in which (from ſelf-partiality, no doubt) I find myſelf extremely like Henry.

PRAY let me hear, if you pleaſe, of Mr. Davenport.—I wiſh I had learnt to *draw* well in early life.—It would have given me ſome very great advantages. Let me hear alſo much of Mr. Melmoth, who, I preſume, has left you long before this time. I did once deſign to have ſent you down my propoſals for a ſubſcription, and requeſted the favour of *you two* to ſettle them finally, without any further reference to myſelf; but my head and ſpirits have been too bad

bad to undertake even a common letter.—What think you of Dr. Lowth's Grammar?—Livie met him at Mr. Dodsley's, and says, he is well pleased with *our* frontispiece, &c. to Horace. Livie could not present his book to Lord Bute, *himself*, on account of my Lord's indisposition. Mr. Dalton (Dr. Dalton's brother), who teaches the King to draw, presented it. It seems, this Dr. Dalton (who gave the drawing of Lord Bute's arms) has lodgings in the palace, and sees the King every day. *While* Livie was *with* him, word came that the King was coming into his room; upon which, Livie was sent out another way.—The King asked Dalton, whom he had with him?—and was answered, an editor of Horace, who had inscribed it to Lord Bute.—Dalton is to present a copy to the King.

I INCLOSE to you a specimen of the decorated parts of Horace, with the frontispiece.—The book will be published in a month's time, when I mean you a copy from those that are allotted to me.

MY Lord Bute's arms are unexceptionably well-finished.—The other plates, either through negligence, or the wilfulness of the designer and engraver, have given me infinite trouble and vexation. However, with about *two-thirds* of

of my directions observed, they will, I hope, afford you some pleasure; and discover somewhat more *beauty* and *spirit* than one commonly finds in such designs.—Send me your remarks very particularly, I beseech you.

W. S.

CVII. To the same.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 20, 1762.

DO I really owe you an apology? you who are embarrassed with such a number of momentous concerns, as hardly allow a fair trial to letters of mere amusement? Alas! I cannot shelter my long silence under a supposition of this kind. I believe, I even *hope*, that you have disapproved my long neglect; as I can very faithfully assure you, I have repeatedly done, *myself*. There are certain times and seasons when I have not either the *power* or the *will* to write: as Hannibal said about attacking Rome, "quandoque mentem non dari, quandoque potestatem." This being an intellectual kind of *lethargy*, it would have been at least a friendly office, if you had *rouzed* me, as you *might* have done, by a su-

a supernumerary letter. I never receive a line from you, but I feel an almost irresistible propensity to answer it that very instant. Impediments sometimes occur; and, that instant being neglected, matter is accumulated for a longer letter than I am always resolute enough to undertake: at the same time, I can never content myself with uttering one half of what I have to say.—Pray is not that *good sort of man*, to whom you allude, a Mr. K—? Let him be ever so good a sort of man in the common estimation, I dare aver him to be neither an ingenious person nor a candid critic. There may be fifty or more preferable readings to what are received in this new Horace; yet he will find a better *text* there, *upon the whole*, than in any one edition before extant. As to the *beauty* of *type* and *press-work*, it is too obvious to need vindication. The accuracy of the *latter* almost exceeds what was ever found in any other book. Then as to the *frontispiece*, it is, I think, much superior to such as *ordinarily* occur; the *subject* animated, and well-chosen; and the *execution* very commendable: at least, if we allow for the *nice* touches which it required, and the *uncommon difficulty* of getting any thing of this kind done to one's direction.

Mr. Walpole is a lively and ingenious writer; not always accurate in his determinations, and

and much leſs ſo in his language: too often led away, by a deſire of routing prejudices and deſtroying giants. And yet there is no province wherein he appears to more advantage, in *general*, than in throwing new light upon Characters in Britiſh Hiſtory. I wiſh he would compoſe a regular work, making this his principal point. He has, with great labour, in his Book of Painters, recorded matters of little importance, relative to people that were of leſs. I have a right to be ſevere, for his volumes coſt me above thirty ſhillings; yet, where he drops the *antiquarian* in them, his remarks are ſtriking, and worth peruſal.—I have ſent for "Geſner's "Rural Poems," and intend to ſee "The Death "of Abel;" though I expect to find ſmall pleaſure in this *poetical proſe*, unleſs exquiſitely well-tuned.—Thank you for the anecdote of Lord Courteney: a thouſand ſuch ſort of things, that engage the public attention, are never capable of penetrating the depth of my retirement.

Mr. Melmoth you will probably ſee often, as he intends to make Bath his place of reſidence. The *Omphale* you ſent me is a moſt excellent figure, and I ſhall wiſh much to get a good caſt of it; at leaſt, when I am able to afford it.—When I write again, I will give you the beſt account I can of *my ſhare* in Dodſley's new

Fables; though it will be no eaſy matter to ſpeak *ſeparately* of it, with any preciſion.

And now, I think, I have ſpoke to moſt of the articles in your laſt letter.—Mr. Dodſley, who ſays he viſited you, would acquaint you how we divided our time whilſt he was here, into two *principal* parts, "l'un à dormir, l'autre à ne "rien faire." Yet we paid our devoirs to a good deal of genteel company; of which this ſeaſon has afforded me at *leaſt* an equal ſhare with any that went before. I will particularize a few; opening the liſt with no leſs perſonages than the Duke and Dutcheſs of Richmond—Mr. Walſh, Member for Worceſter—Earl of Bath with Dr. Monſon, Mrs. Montague (who wrote the three laſt Dialogues printed with Lord Lyttelton's), and other company, from Hagley—Sir Richard Aſhley—Mr. Mordaunt—Dr. Charlton with Mr. Knight—Earl and Counteſs of Northampton—Mr. Amyand—Lord Plymouth and Sir Harry Parker—Mr. and Mrs. Morrice of Percefield—Lord Mansfield with Mr. Baron Smythe, Lord Dartmouth and Mr. Talbot—Marquis of Taviſtock and Earl of Oſſory—your nephew Mr. Graves, with Mr. Hopton and one of the ſenior Proctors of Oxford—Lord and Lady Dacre—Baron Pleſſen, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the King of Denmark, with Mr. Weirdt

Wendt his Tutor—Lord and Lady Vernon of Sudbury, with his children, Sir Charles and Lady Tynte, and Mr. Garrick's brother—Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth—Colonel James—Lady Ward and Lady Uill, with Miſs Wrottesley, Miſs Pigott, &c.—Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Lyttelton, and Mr. Ruſt—Lord and Lady Dartmouth with Lord and Lady Willoughby de Broke—Mr. Anſon of Shuckburgh with Mr. Stuart the painter and publiſher of "Athenian Ruins"—Mr. Pepys and Sir W. Wheeler's ſon, Mr. Pitt's nephew, &c.—Colonel Bamfylde with Mr. Knight's Family, &c. &c. I did not imagine my liſt would have engroſſed ſo much of my paper, and have ſo little room to ſpeak about the individuals.—Lord M— appeared to me rather a *man of wit* than a *man of taſte*; Baron Smythe, the reverſe—Mr. and Mrs. Morrice, extremely polite and agreeable people, invited me preſſingly to their habitation; I could not help reflecting on the ſingular happineſs of Mr. Morrice, to be poſſeſſed at once of a large fortune, one of the fineſt ſituations in England, and a wife whoſe taſte for rural improvements appears even ſuperior to his own; at leaſt, if the *beauty* of her *perſon* did not impoſe upon my judgement. There are many others whom I would diſtinguiſh, if my time or paper would permit.—I ſuppoſe that you and Mr. Dodſley would be mighty unanimous

mous with regard to the propriety of ſetting my ſubſcription on foot—I do not diſpute any of your arguments—they tally exactly with my own opinion; at leaſt, allowing for the higher idea you have of my pieces than they deſerve—the truth is, that I have deferred the publication too long *already*—till many of the compoſitions will not appear to the ſame advantage as before: and till I have not half the power that I had formerly, to improve them. When I am low-ſpirited, I almoſt ſhudder at this tremendous contract with the publick; when my ſpirits are elevated, I ſee the neceſſity that you do, of not loſing a moment's time—were you here a week, you would put the matter upon a footing that was unalterable—would to God you *were* here, or any one *like* you! however, it is probable you will *ſoon* hear from me again upon this very ſubject—I *know* this, that, *if* I print at *all*, the ſubſcription is by no means to be neglected this preſent winter.—I have ſeen our friend Dr. Charlton many times this ſeaſon; at The Leaſowes; at Mr. Knight's; at his own houſe; and at my Lord Foley's. This viſit to my Lord Foley's was performed about three weeks ago. I went with young Knight; and the company of the Doctor and Sir Francis Charleton took off all reſtraint, and made the viſit perfectly agreeable. My Lord's behaviour was entirely free and hoſpita-

ble; and his converſation lively and entertaining—I muſt confeſs, far beyond the idea which I have been taught to conceive of him.—His table, the moſt magnificent, I believe, of any Nobleman's for thirty miles round—His park, and Woobery-hill adjacent, afford views that are either extenſive, wild, beautiful, or grand. The portico before his lodge deſerves particular notice—his houſe large, and commodious, and well furniſhed; but ſcarce any of the rooms *high* enough to ſtand the teſt of modern criticiſm. But what ſtrikes more than all the reſt, is the magnificence of his Chapel—which however I cannot ſtay to deſcribe; for I, this very *moment*, receive your letter.—After having written ſo much before, I can only touch upon ſome few particulars.—I believe, my ſcheme of publication will proceed in a little time, and that you will ſoon hear from me again.—If you can poſſibly excuſe me to Mr. Davenport, and keep me well with him for a week or fortnight, I will not fail to write him a reſpectful letter.—I am truly aſhamed of my neglect; but have written more letters within this week than I have done for a quarter of a year before.—That there is a faction forming againſt Lord B—, I readily believe.—The war may ſuit the *mercantile* world; and the City of London has generally the art to repreſent the *landed* and *trading* intereſt as *preciſely* the

ſame

ſame thing—But I think there is a very material difference; which it would be no way difficult to demonſtrate—at leaſt I am one that cry out,

"Nulla ſalus bello; pacem te poſcimus omnes!"

I am quite unacquainted with the affair relating to Colonel Wilkes and Lord Bute's ſon.—And now (though I mean to write again ſoon) I will releaſe you from this unpleaſing ſcrawl.—I beg however that you would not fail to write to me *directly*, if you can find leiſure; being quite impatient to converſe with you, after ſuch a chaſm in our correſpondence; and being, with unvariable affection, my dear friend, for ever yours.—Pray my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Graves.

W. SHENSTONE.

My friend Dr. Grainger has written a Poem, in blank verſe, which he calls "The Sugar-"Cane."—It is divided into four books—and is capable of being *rendered* a good Poem. My friend Jago has written another Poem, in blank verſe alſo, which he calls "Edge-hill."—It is deſcriptive chiefly of the proſpect—but admits an account of *the fight* there, and many little *tales* and *epiſodes*; with compliments alſo to the gentry of Warwickſhire.—It lies now upon my table.

CVIII. To Mr. Jago.

My dear friend, 1762.

A THOUSAND thanks to you for the very obliging and humorous Poem which you are so kind to send me. I really think it very ingenious, and, upon the whole, extremely correct; although I have taken the liberty of proposing one or two hints for farther improvement. The relation that it bears to me and my place *may* tend to prejudice my *judgement*; but I cannot conceive that it requires aught beside *impartiality*, to relish the beauties of this Poem. I beg I may receive a fair copy in your own hand, as soon as possible; and I will consider, in the mean time, how to shew it to the publick in the most advantageous manner. It certainly does me *honour:* as things are at present circumstanced, it may *tend* to do me *good*; which I am very sure you would be glad to see. I am a little ashamed to be so much behind-hand with you, in favours of *this* and *other* kinds: but I live in hopes there may come a day, when I shall find occasion to express my gratitude. The pictures you sent arrived safe on Thursday; and have been since cleaned, and put up in their places. I cannot enter upon this subject now; finding

finding it almoſt ſix o'clock at night, and having juſt received a letter from Mr. Dodſley, which he requires me to anſwer by return of poſt. It relates to the *ſcheme* mentioned in his laſt, which is intended for my emolument; but which I muſt not expect to ſucceed, without conſiderable mortification. This *inter nos*.—You muſt by no means lay aſide the thoughts of perfecting *Edge-hill*, at your leiſure. It is poſſible that, in order to keep clear of flattery, I have ſaid leſs in its favour than I really *ought*—but I never conſidered it otherwiſe than as a Poem which it was very adviſeable for you to compleat, and *finiſh*. I am now to deſire my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Jago, and to bid you an affectionate adieu.

"Tu comes antiquus! tu primis junctus ab
"annis!"

I AM, my dear friend! ever yours, with the trueſt eſteem,

Dec. 18, 1762. W. SHENSTONE.

CIX. To SHERRINGTON DAVENPORT, Esq;

The Leasowes,
Dear Sir, Jan. 4, 1763.

MR. G— tells me, that you have done me the honour to lay some stress upon receiving a letter from me. Alas! it must be owing purely to your benevolence, which makes you wish to hear of an absent friend, and not to any expectations you can reasonably form of entertainment from his pen. The long letter with which you favoured me was so very lively as well as ingenious, that I despaired of drawing from my fountains the vivacity you do from the Bath waters. But, be this as it will, the vein of friendship that runs through your letter demands my amplest acknowledgements; and if you will accept of *such* returns, I promise they will be as *hearty* as they are *insipid*.

I AGREE with you, that the first sallies of imagination will generally prove the most sprightly; and that they will often comprehend the principal features of a subject. They are of the nature of dead-colouring in a portrait; which one sometimes thinks more spirited than the same performance when finished. And yet a *good*

a *good* painter will not *hurt* a portrait by the subsequent labour he bestows upon it, nor will a *good* writer injure his piece by the pains he takes to round and perfect it. It must be some defect in the taste of either that makes his diligence detrimental, or gives occasion for a stander-by to cry out, "Manum de tabula." I believe it will appear upon examination, that works which cost most labour have generally been thought the *easiest* and pleased the *longest*. One cannot, however, deny that there is a sort of persons formed by nature for *shooting-flying* (which, by the way, I could never *do*), and that their sallies of imagination are what they can hardly improve by any future pains. These may be called men of wit and fire, but it is the union of *taste* with these that constitutes fine writing. True taste will never stiffen or overcharge any performance: it will rather be employed to smooth, simplify, and give that ease on which *grace* depends. One can as little deny that there are *kinds* of writing which have a better chance than others to succeed without much labour, which start forth mature at *first*, as Pallas did from the brain of Jupiter. Works of *humour* are often of this sort; and there are many instances in Butler's Hudibras. Yet I think the humour of *Swift* was greatly owing to a judicious *revisal*. Pardon me, my dear friend,

for this tedious diſcuſſion, which you little thought of bringing upon yourſelf by the obliging hint you gave concerning thoſe verſes upon Venus. I do acknowledge that an additional ſtanza there, containing a reflexion on Chineſe architecture, were better laid aſide. It ſeemed to me one of the "ſplendida peccata," that might be a little *popular* at this *time*; and has, therefore, for this ſeaſon, appeared on a board by the ſide of the Venus. We, who cannot erect freſh temples, or even add a new garden-ſeat every ſpring, are obliged to make the moſt we can of a new and tolerable copy of verſes, that coſts us *thought* inſtead of *money*; and even at a pinch to piece out a dull ſcene with duller poetry: how elſe could I keep my place in countenance, ſo near the pompous piles of Hagley? And yet there are few *faſhionable* viſitants that do not ſhew an *affection* for the little Amoret, as much as they admire the ſtately Sachariſſa — "plerumque gratæ *diviti-* "*bus vices*." I have often conſidered why thoſe poſſeſſed of palaces yet eſteem a root-houſe or a cottage as a deſireable object in their gardens.— Is it not from having experienced the imperfection of happineſs in higher life, that they are led to *conceive* it more compleat beneath a roof of ſtraw; where, perhaps, it may really be as defective as in the apartments of a King or a Miniſter?

Minister?—A thousand thanks to you and Mrs. Davenport for the accommodations you so kindly offer me. Experience will no more suffer me to question the *cordiality* than the politeness of your reception. What an amusing picture have you given of Bath! pleasures carried to the utmost height, and opiates ready when one is cloyed with pleasures! And yet, let me confess a truth, you have *lightly* touched upon those *very* articles, which would prove to me the most *specifically* pleasing. For can any temptation be stronger, than to say that *you* reside there? and does not my friend G— reside at Claverton, of whose genius and friendship I have had proofs these twenty years past? and have you not Mr. Webb, and now Mr. Melmoth, to make Bath *enviable* for the residence of literature? what a joy would it afford me to go on a party with you to Percefield, whither Mr. and Mrs. Morrice gave me the most pressing invitations! —These surely are pleasures of which—I *hope* one day to partake.

My health, generally bad in winter and spring, has hitherto been tolerable. The *influenza* of last spring continued to depress me half the summer. Would you think the verses I inclosed were written on that occasion by a young journeyman shoe-maker; and one that lives at the village

village of Rowley, near me? He considered my disorder in somewhat too *grave* a light, as I did not think my life endangered by it; but, allowing for this, and the *partiality* he shews *me*, you will think the lines pretty extraordinary for one of *his occupation*. They are not, however, the *only*, or, perhaps, the *chief* specimens of his genius; and yet, before he came to me, his principal knowledge was drawn from *Magazines*. For these two or three years past, I have lent him Classics, and other books in English. You see, to *him*, I am a great Mæcenas; although you and my friend expect me to become an author by subscription. — On this head I will say no more at *present*, than that I am infinitely obliged by your extreme friendly offers. My friend G—, who knows my sentiments, has sometimes the honour of waiting on you; I ought not, therefore, after this tedious epistle, to begin to trouble you with a written explanation of them. Believe me, dear Sir, with my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Davenport,

Your ever obliged

and most obedient servant,

W. SHENSTONE.

I WILL send you some other of Woodhouse's verses, when I can get him to transcribe them.

CX. To

CX. To Mr. Jago.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 4, 1763.

MY last letter must have been confused, and the arrival of it, I fear, uncertain.

The hare and birds in one of the pictures which you sent me, I think, are well. The other parts of it indifferent. The greyhound worst of all. The portrait is by no means equal to its companion, either in beauty of the person, or skill of the painter; yet it matches so well with the other, that I find my parlour very much embellished by it. Pardon the freedom with which I criticise your present; and accept once more my very thankful acknowledgements.

I am truly glad to find so worthy a Nobleman, and so warm a friend of yours, as my Lord Willoughby is, made a Lord of the Bed-chamber.

I have heard nothing since I wrote last in regard to *my* affair; though I expect to do so every day. I have such a tribe of humours and peculiarities, that it is easier to make me rich

rich than to make me happy; and ten to one that the favour will not be conferred without diſguſting ſome of theſe ſaid humours, &c. However, one muſt make the beſt of it; and reflect, that mortifications in one place may preclude mortifications in another.

I GO to-morrow, by appointment, to Enville; where I may probably ſtay till Saturday. I have wiſhed moſt heartily for a copy of your Fable to take with me; but Dodſley has not yet returned that I ſent him. Pray conſider my propoſed alterations rather as hints than real improvements, and let me have a copy as ſoon you can. I wrote my criticiſm over twice, and know not whether I ſent the beſt or the worſt copy; ſo I ſend the other, though perhaps much the ſame. I forgot to particularize many ſhining parts in your little Fable, that are either elegant or humourous: of the former ſort, nothing could be happier than what you ſay about H—; as it touches, in the *gentleſt* manner, on a poſſible truth, which, if expreſſed rather than implied, might not be altogether inoffenſive. This beauty is produced by ſubſtituting H— inſtead of L—, the place inſtead of the proprietor.

I HAVE lately read "The Death of Abel."—It is not void of merit; but might have been made

made much more pathetic by a more ſimple and proſaic ſtyle.

I DESIRE my beſt reſpects to Mrs Jago and your family.—May not I ſee you here this Chriſtmas? as I wiſh to do, becauſe it is the ſeaſon preſent; and not that I am not at all times and at all ſeaſons moſt unfeignedly glad to wait upon you, and moſt affectionately your ever faithful ſervant:

" Tecum etenim longos memini conſumere ſoles,
" Et tecum primas epulis decerpere noctes.
" Unum opus, & requiem pariter diſponimus
" ambo, &c."

Your kind remembrance of me in your Edge-hill has brought theſe quotations into my head. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

CXI. To the ſame.

My good friend, Jan. 11, 1763.

I AM ſuſpicious that my letters (of which I have ſent two) do not reach you by the way of Warwick. This is meant as an experiment whether

whether they will arrive by way of Southam. It is meant withall to remind you of perfecting your little Fable, and dispatching it to me as soon as may be. I would fain transmit a copy to Lord S—'s, before the family separates, or leaves Enville; by whom, I am sure, it would be admired.

I AM just returned from a visit which I made there, of four or five days passed very happily. At coming away, I shewed my Lord two or three of Mr. D—'s last letters, which laid open to him the scheme that was carrying on for me. I requested also, if there should be occasion (which there possibly might *not*), that he would allow me the honour of being known to him. He said, "he was glad to find what was going "forward; and had long wished to see some-"thing of that sort begun before: that he "should be in town, I think, in February; "and would do me any service in his power. "He desired me also to acquaint Mr. D— (in "(allusion to the latter's uncertainty about my "Lord's political connexions) that he thought it "the duty of every honest man to support the "present Government; and that he should con-"tinue his regard for the Minister so long as he "saw nothing in his measures that was preju-"dicial to his Country."

I know that you will take a friendly part in any good that may befall me. Pray write, be it ever ſo careleſsly; and believe me ever yours and Mrs. Jago's moſt affectionate and faithful

W. S.

"The writer ſurvived the date of this letter but "a ſhort time, his death happening on the eleventh "of the following month, to the inexpreſſible grief "of his more intimate friends, and the generous "concern of thoſe, who, too late acquainted with his "merit, were indulging themſelves in the pleaſing "thought of having provided for his future eaſe, and "tranquil enjoyment of life."

THE END.

The Reader is desired to correct the following

ERRATA.

Page	Line	
7.	4.	*for* goodness *read* oddness
8.	8.	*for* that *read* what
13.	7.	*for* there *read* then
16.	10.	*for* poem *read* paper
17.	2.	*for* when *read* where
46.	16.	*dele the second* of
54.	19.	*for* . . . . . *read* Fame
74.	4.	*for* obliged *read* not obliged
86.	20.	*for* dextrous *read* desirous
170.	2.	*for* will risque *read* will not risque
384.	15.	*for* have *read* leave

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